

completion, the rearmament of existing units and the formation of new ones continued. Stalin understood that the Red Army was still far from ready for a duel with the Wehrmacht, although he tried not to show it. Undoubtedly, he also remembered the failure of the Warsaw and Lvov operations in 1920. Stalin was at that time a member of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Southwestern Front. Then, due to the underestimation of the enemy, the uncoordinated actions of the Western and Southwestern fronts, and the mistakes of the high command, the Soviet troops were defeated. Finally, just a year and a half ago, he observed how many inconsistencies were revealed during the mobilization of the troops of the border districts and their entry into Poland, although the Poles practically did not put up organized resistance. They also reported to him about difficulties with fuel. And here it was proposed to defeat the mobilized and combat-ready German army, repelling counterattacks not by cavalry, but by Wehrmacht tank formations. To get involved in a war when the country's economy has not been transferred to a war footing, and even the mobilization plan has not been fully worked out in this regard? Not surprisingly, the leader rejected the proposed adventure. An indirect proof of this can be the decision of Stalin, who on June 3 gave permission for additional large deliveries of non-ferrous and rare metals to Germany (copper 6,000 tons, nickel 1,500 tons, tin, molybdenum and tungsten, 500 tons each) from the special reserves of the country, which was not enough [723]. Deliveries were carried out strictly according to the agreed plan. Why sacrifice your reserves of strategic raw materials, strengthening your enemy, which is planned to be struck in the near future?

According to historian V.A. Anfilov, in 1965 Zhukov told him the following:

"The idea to prevent a German attack came to Timoshenko and me in connection with a speech by Stalin on May 5, 1941, to graduates of military academies, in which he spoke of the possibility of acting in an offensive manner. This action, in a situation where the enemy was concentrating forces on our borders, convinced us of the need to draw up a directive providing for a pre-emptive strike. A specific task was set by A.M. Vasilevsky. On May 15, he reported the draft directive to the People's Commissar and me. However, we this document

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did not sign, they decided to report it to Stalin first. Noon really boiled when he heard about the warning strike on the German troops. "Are you out of your mind, do you want to provoke the Germans?" Stalin said irritably. We referred to the situation developing near the borders of the USSR, to the ideas contained in his speech on May 5 ... "So I said this to encourage those present to think about victory, and not about the invincibility of the German army, which the newspapers of the whole world are trumpeting Stalin growled. So there was a funeral for our idea of a warning strike..." According to Zhukov, "<...> the conversation ended with Stalin's threat" [724].

Approximately the same reaction of Stalin to the proposal of the military is drawn by an employee of the Military History Journal Ia N.A. Svetlishin, who, on behalf of the Institute of Military History, repeatedly spoke with G.K. Zhukov in 1965-1966. In 1966, he wrote down a slightly different version of what happened from the words of the marshal:

"<...> I handed over my report to Stalin through his personal secretary Poskrebyshev. I still do not know either the further fate of this note or Stalin's decision on it. And the lesson taught on this occasion to me was remembered forever. The next day, N.A. Poskrebyshev, who met me in Stalin's waiting room, reported his reaction to my note. He said that Stalin was very angry with my report and instructed him to convey to me that in the future I would no longer write such notes "for the prosecutor", that the chairman of the Council of People's Commissars was more aware of the prospects for our relations with Germany than the chief of the General Staff, that the Soviet Union still has enough time to prepare a decisive battle with fascism. And the implementation of my proposals would only play into the hands of the enemies of Soviet power" [725].

Many years later, from the height of his experience, Zhukov admitted that Stalin was right in this matter. So, according to the testimony of V.A. Anfilov, the marshal said the following about Stalin's reaction to the proposed plan: "It's good that Stalin did not agree with us. Otherwise, we would have got something similar to Kharkov in 1942" [726].

Despite the differences in details in the presentation of conversations with the marshal by his interlocutors, in the main they are the same: from

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Stalin's negative reaction to the document reported to him remains unchanged. But Zhukov did not confuse some things in his memoirs, not to mention private conversations. Sometimes the question is asked: how could Zhukov hand over a top secret document of special importance not to Stalin himself, but to his secretary? They say that this could not be, because it is prohibited by the relevant instructions. The argument that Zhukov could have been stopped by some kind of instruction looks simply ridiculous. The Chief of the General Staff handed over the package to Stalin's secretary against signature, with instructions to hand it over "in person." What's special here? The military, having stated their arguments and proposals in a note, hoped to substantiate their considerations at a personal meeting. Having learned from Poskrebyshev about Stalin's reaction, they had time to think over and substantiate their other proposals for preparing to repulse a possible attack by German troops, in the inevitability of which they were sure. And Stalin will arrange a scolding for them later, at a convenient moment for him. This he knew how to do and loved to do.

From the unpublished memoirs of Marshal G.K. Zhukov:

"<...> I well remember Stalin's words when we reported to him about the suspicious actions of the German troops - "<...> Hitler and his generals are not such fools as to fight simultaneously on two fronts, on which the Germans broke their neck in the First World War", and further: "<...> Hitler does not have enough strength to fight on two fronts, and Hitler will not go on an adventure" [727].

Stalin did not agree to the covert mobilization of troops under the guise of "Large training camps" (BUS), which was envisaged by the Manual on Mobilization. The announcement of mobilization, even partial, would be impossible to conceal. And in the note "Considerations...", undoubtedly, it was about the BUS, since the decision on the training camps for assigned staff, adopted by the government on March 8, was already practically being implemented in the districts. Nor did Stalin give sanction for the redeployment of aviation from remote districts and its concentration on field airfields, as well as for the deployment of an aviation rear and a hospital base. It was generally impossible to hide the last measures either from our own population, or, even more so, from enemy reconnaissance.

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It cannot be said that the Soviet leadership only passively watched the unfolding events. Measures to strengthen the grouping of troops near the western border were undoubtedly taken, including through the advancement of reserve armies from the depths of the country. The last fact Rezun and his willing or unwitting followers consider the main and irrefutable evidence that the plan proposed in the note "Considerations ..." was approved. They are trying to pass off the natural desire of the political and military leadership of the USSR to strengthen the defense of our western borders as preparations for Soviet aggression. They are silent about the fact that the decision to strengthen the grouping of Soviet troops in the Western theater of operations was made long before the note of the General Staff of May 15. It was undoubtedly related to the concentration of German troops near the Soviet border. After all, Stalin had repeatedly received information from various sources that the Germans were going to attack the USSR on May 14, and then on May 21. These dates were quite realistic, but they were postponed due to unplanned operations in the Balkans. Naturally, in the USSR at that time nothing definite could be known about this.

Troops from the Far East were the first to be sent to the western military districts. The moment of the beginning of their preparation for the transfer was not chosen by chance: on April 13, 1941, the Neutrality Pact was signed between the USSR and Japan. This significantly eased the longstanding tension on the eastern outskirts of the country. It became possible to release part of the forces concentrated there and use them to strengthen the defense in the West, where the threat of a big war was brewing. The treaty was ratified by the Japanese on April 25 and entered into force from that moment.

The very next day, in agreement with the government, the General Staff issued a preliminary order to the command of the ZabVO and the Far Eastern Fleet to prepare the 5th MK, 31st and 32nd sk, which included nine divisions, as well as two airborne brigades, for dispatch to the west. , 211th and 212th [728]. On the same day, April 26, the command of the Siberian Military District received an order to transfer the 201st Rifle Division from its composition to the ZapOVO by May 15, and the 225th Rifle Division to the KOVO. At the same time, to replace the departed troops, by May 30, redeployed to the Siberian Military District

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the 57th TD and the 82nd MD from the ZabVO fell. At the same time, the Urals Military District was ordered to transfer two of its rifle divisions, the 203rd and 223rd, to PribOVO by May 10. Both of these districts were previously assigned the role of a reserve force for the Far East. In the changed conditions, it was considered possible to redirect them to the west [729].

From May 13 to May 22, the General Staff ordered the transfer from the Ural Military District, PriVO and ZabvVO to the western border of three armies - the 16th, 21st and 22nd (32 divisions in total). They should have arrived at their destinations between June 10 to July 10th. To carry out military transportation, it was planned to submit 939 railway echelons for loading. Quite a large amount of traffic for peacetime, given the low capacity of the railways in the western direction. In addition to them, by June 10, it was planned to advance the 19th Army from the North Caucasus Military District, consisting of one mechanized and two rifle corps. Another one, the 25th sk, by June 13 was transferred to the operational subordination of this army from the KhVO [730]. In the event of a possible aggravation of relations with the Germans and their peaceful resolution, Stalin might need these forces as an additional trump card in the big game that he was going to play with Hitler. Moreover, reserve armies would be needed if the conflict escalated into hostilities, which would be unwise to rule out completely. So the measures taken were of a reciprocal nature, which the "rezunists" are trying in every possible way to obscure. But these measures were clearly late and were half-hearted. On the one hand, they strengthened the grouping of troops in the theater of operations, on the other, they did not dare to take additional and more decisive measures at the right time to increase the combat readiness of troops in the border districts so as not to provoke Hitler and not give him an extra pretext for an attack.

Of course, other measures were also taken and started to be implemented to strengthen the defense of our western border and increase the combat readiness of the troops of the border districts. So, on May 14, the People's Commissar of Defense ordered the early graduation of second-year cadets of military schools, sending them immediately to military units no later than June 15. On May 15, the General Staff allowed in tank units to keep a platoon with a striker directly in tanks that are on canned food.

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tion [731]. On May 27, the commanders of the western military districts were ordered to start building the command post of the fronts and complete it by 30.7, and also to begin equipping the positions of artillery and air defense forces with the completion of work by 15.7 [732].

To prove the preparation of the Red Army for delivering a preemptive strike against the enemy, it is sometimes argued that the forces and means of the army covering areas did not meet the statutory requirements for organizing defense and that the grouping of troops created in the border districts was more adapted to the offensive than to defense. At the same time, the Bialystok ledge is necessarily mentioned; from which it was possible to strike at the flank and rear of the Lublin grouping of the enemy. What does the density of forces and means in the cover areas have to do with it, and what authorized density can we talk about in this case? The operational density of the first echelon troops in the three main districts, which is calculated taking into account the second echelons (reserves) of the covering armies, averaged 32-38 km per division, in the OdVO - 62, and in the LenVO - even 124 (see table 6.5). For an offensive with decisive goals, the density of forces and means must be much higher than in defense, especially in the directions of planned strikes. Speaking about the advantage of the groupings of troops of the border districts, supposedly more adapted to the offensive than to defense, they apparently mean that the maneuver of forces and means to create superiority in forces and means over the enemy is easier to carry out from the depths than along the front. . Indeed, to go over to the offensive it is more convenient to use the second echelons of the districts, which were located 20-100 km from the border, as well as the reserves located even deeper, 150-400 km. They included an average of two-thirds of the total forces of each district.

But for the success of the offensive, it is necessary to securely secure the flanks of the strike groupings being created. The formations of the first echelon, numbering a total of 55 divisions and 2 brigades (one third of all the forces of the districts) and stretched in a thread along the border, at best could only pin down the opposing enemy. They could fulfill the task of securing the flank of the strike force of the most powerful in terms of combat strength, the 10th Army of the Western Front, located in the center of the Bialystok ledge, its |

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composed of the 2nd and 8th Rifle Divisions with attached units, which was supposed to cover section No. | border cover area No. 2 with a width of 157 km? His task in the "red package" was formulated as follows:

"<...> a) Defend the state border in the zone of the foreground, preventing the enemy from invading the territory of the USSR. Encircle and destroy enemy units that break through the state border.

6) In the event of an offensive by clearly superior enemy forces, firmly occupy and defend the main defensive line" [733].

The question is, could the corps fulfill this task even if the prepared positions were taken in time? The capabilities of the covering troops in repelling enemy attacks can be judged from the report of the Chief of Staff of the 8th Army, Major General GA. Larionov to the command of PribOVO in January 1941:

"Two rifle divisions located on the border section of the 8th Army are not able to cover the state border <...>, the cover front of 160 km is too wide <...> The density of fire is negligible (one gun and two machine guns per kilometer of front) » [734].

In mid-June, the commander of the 125th Rifle Division, Major General P.P. Bogaychuk reported:

"<...> the forefield zone without garrisons of troops of the German offensive will not delay<...> The forefield zone of the division<...> according to the time calculation, the Germans will be captured before the withdrawal of our units there" [735].

High authorities reassured subordinates:

"No provocations, cowardice, panic. You have the strength and means. Manage firmly, use everything boldly and skillfully, do not be nervous, but be truly in full combat readiness" [736].

By 0300 hours on June 22, formations of the 8th Army (except for the 48th Rifle Division), on the basis of a verbal instruction from the district commander, after the exercises, occupied the areas of their destination. Tactical density has doubled. But this was completely insufficient to repel the enemy offensive and ensure the deployment of the main forces. More

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the situation was worse in the 11th Army's cover sector, where on the front line there remained basically one battalion each from the regiments of the divisions of the first echelon, which were engaged in equipping field positions (see Diagram 7).

However, let us return to the Bialystok ledge. According to the proposed plan for a preemptive strike, the Western Front was to strike with its left wing, that is, with the forces of the 13th and 4th armies. However, the 13th Army, whose cover area was assigned between the 10th and 4th Armies, was never fully formed even by the start of the war. The directorate of the 13th Army, intended to unite the 49th and 113th rifle divisions and the 13th mechanized corps, continued to remain in Mogilev. On 22.6, completely subordinate to the army

there were no troops, they began to arrive only from June 24! [737]. This is another evidence that no one seriously thought about delivering a preemptive strike by the forces of the left wing of the Western Front towards the South-Western Front.

In order to substantiate the thesis that the troops of the border districts were not preparing for defense, M. Meltyukhov cites the words of General M.A. taken out of context. Gareeva: "The unfavorable position of the Soviet troops was aggravated by the fact that the troops of the border military districts had tasks not for defensive operations, but only for covering the deployment of troops" [738]. Further, Meltyukhov draws a "logical" conclusion: since defensive operations were not developed, it means that offensive ones were developed! But at the same time, he does not take into account that [Areev's] remark was made from the position of today, when the results of the defeat of the covering armies are known.

All this is nothing more than verbal balancing act: the troops were preparing for defense in order to cover deployment and from mobilization. Here is what is written in the explanatory note to the Cover Plan of the mentioned 1st sk:

"<...> to conduct a stubborn defense in cooperation with all branches of the armed forces, to fight on a wide front with individual garrisons independently, to the last strength, without leaving their place, since the corps is not allowed to retreat" [739].

' The 113th SD of the 13th MK had to be reassigned to the 10th Army, and the 49th SD to the 4th.

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The tasks for the development of army (especially front) defensive operations were not set for the districts because the first battles of a future war were presented to our generals as a clash of forward units, as happened at the beginning of the First World War. The sad experience of military operations in France, whose leaders hoped to sit behind the powerful "Maginot Line", they really did not take into account. Thus, the possibility of defeating the covering troops was laid down already at the planning stage. The covering armies, with their formations stretched out in a string and unfinished URs, rather resembled a curtain that was organized by the Revolutionary Military Council of the young Soviet republic in the spring of 1918. operating directions. The curtain consisted of three sections, each consisting of several rows. The curtain troops, numbering about 36 thousand fighters, then covered the front from the Gulf of Finland to Kursk [740]. In 1941, to cover a strip of 1,500 km, 55 divisions and two brigades were involved in the first echelon, and all of them were obviously doomed to defeat. When our military leaders realized this, it was already too late: Stalin forbade them to move especially so as not to provoke the Germans.

There was very little information about specific enemy groupings opposing the districts and his intentions. Therefore, when setting tasks to cover the state border, they mainly proceeded from their own ideas about the importance of areas and directions without taking into account possible enemy actions. It was clear that the enemy would not fail to take advantage of favorable conditions to cover the flanks of the grouping of Soviet troops in the Bialystok salient with the aim of their subsequent encirclement. It should be recalled that, starting from 1939, when choosing the places of deployment of troops in the annexed territories, they were guided not by the expediency of their operational mission, but by the presence of a barracks fund and other possible places for accommodating personnel. The successive chiefs of the General Staff took no real measures to counteract the enemy's plan. According to a member of the Military Council of the ZAPO VO, divisional commissar A.Ya. Fominykh, command

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district within 8 months, with all reports and operational studies, reported to the General Staff about the unfavorable configuration of the state border in the front line. The military council of the district demanded to strengthen the very vulnerable flanks of the grouping, but they did not agree with it for 6-7 months. And only at the end of May - beginning of June was it allowed to withdraw the 56th and 85th rifle divisions to the Grodno direction and the 75th rifle division to the Brest direction, and later the 113th rifle division [741].

Unfortunately, in the situation that was developing by the summer of 1941, when the enemy had already forestalled the Red Army troops in concentrating and deploying their troops, the option of organizing a strategic defense in the Western theater to repel aggression was not even considered. Because such a thing was not envisaged by our military doctrine at all. G.K. Zhukov retroactively expressed regret in his manuscript that "neither in theory nor in practice have other forms of conducting operational-strategic operations been properly reflected. The training of troops in defensive actions, head-on engagements, and retreat actions rarely went beyond the tactical framework. <...> And worst of all, military theory worked out the issues of conducting combat, battles and operations in encirclement conditions, breaking through and leaving encirclement and retreat actions, which our troops had to face in the initial period of the war" [742]. The reader can easily imagine what Stalin and his henchmen would have done with those who would have dared to suggest such topics for practicing in the exercises. They would immediately be accused of defeatism and erased into camp DUST.

It is interesting how the apologists for a pre-emptive strike resolve the issue of the timing of its delivery. In this regard, Rezun did the easiest. The specific date of the attack on Germany - July 6, 1941 - he "calculated" on the basis of one phrase, torn from the general context of the post-war work "Initial

new period of the war. He quotes: "... Literally in the last two weeks (emphasis added by the author), the German fascist command managed to forestall our troops" [743]. But he quotes in his trademark style, cutting off the end of the phrase: "to complete the deployment and thereby create favorable conditions for seizing the strategic initiative at the beginning of the war." Tem

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the meaning of what was said was completely distorted, because the work dealt with the concentration and operational deployment of troops for defense purposes to cover the state border. And nothing is said about going over to the offensive [744]. After 15 pages, Rezun deftly rewrites the quoted phrase in his own way (already without a link to the page), giving it a completely different MEANING: "<...> the German troops managed to preempt us literally by two weeks" (emphasis added by the author) [745].

There is another piece of evidence that the proponents of the pre-emptive strike theory constantly use to prove their case. This fact is much more serious than the ridiculous "evidence" of Rezun. First of all, because it was found by General of the Army M.A. Gareev, who is a consistent and irreconcilable antipode not only to Rezun, but also to all opponents of the official Soviet version of the beginning of the war. All the more weighty is his testimony in this matter. In one of his works he wrote:

"It is significant that already in the "Considerations on the Strategic Deployment of the Armed Forces" dated March 11, 1941, in the section of tasks for the Southwestern Front, N.F. Watuchi made a characteristic addition: "Offensive to begin 12.6." [746].

This phrase, according to Gareev, was inscribed by Vatutin in pencil into the main text of the plan, which Vasilevsky himself made in ink. The plan itself was published twice: first in the Military Historical Journal [747], and then in the first volume of the collection of documents "1941" [748]. Unfortunately, both publications were incomplete. Until now, maps and annexes to this plan have not been made public. Moreover, there are extensive cuts in the text, for example, the section mentioned by Gareev, which refers to the task of the South-Western Front, is completely absent there. The information that appeared not only did not clarify, but, on the contrary, gave rise to a lot of questions that still remain unanswered. Of these, the most important: who, when and for what reason could instruct Vatutin to supplement the text of the plan with this phrase? About this now, in the absence of the necessary information, one can only guess. This is what the supporters of carrying out a preemptive strike on Germany did: supposedly Vatutin could do this only from the words of Stalin, who had him

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several times in those days. However, in fact, Vatutin then visited Stalin twice only in January, neither in February nor in March did he visit him. And what does "from the words" mean? It meant war! This required a political decision!

Why isn't anyone making a fuss this time about Vatu's violating secrecy instructions? The general gave away state secrets, revealed the date of the attack on the country with which

N.F. Vatutin concluded a non-aggression pact and even friendship! And this is despite the well-known caution of Stalin! Zhukov's note with "Considerations ..." could only be read by Stalin, to whom it was intended "personally". And a wider circle of people could get acquainted with the date of the start of the offensive (war!) A few months before the deadline! And in general, how could one determine the start date of the operation three months before it began, when so much could change? In addition, just at that time, a structural reorganization of the country's armed forces was started, and we did not even have a real mobplan! And it was not known what, to whom, where and from where to submit mobile resources?

However, the answer to this and other questions concerning the Vatutin insertion is of undoubted interest only from the point of view of the history of the development of prewar Soviet military planning. Indeed, by and large, they do not have any practical significance: the plan for the strategic deployment of the armed forces of the Soviet Union in the West and East of March 11, 1941 was not launched. The directives developed on its basis for the western border districts and the navy were never sent to their addressees [749]. So this plan never acquired the force of an order, neither before Vatutin's addition, nor after it.

Meanwhile, the phrase inscribed by Vatutin in pencil (! 7) in the text of the task of the Southwestern Front is being used with might and main

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even serious scholars are still aware, although they have no idea either of its true meaning, or of the causes and circumstances of its appearance. Nevertheless, relying on it, they draw far-reaching conclusions with enviable confidence. Here, for example, is what M. Meltyukhov claims:

"The opinion expressed in the literature that "the plan of March 11, 1941 is the most accurate final expression of generally accepted views and most accurately reflects Stalin's personal position" can only be accepted

partially. Indeed, this document set out the quintessence of the "generally accepted views" of the Soviet leadership on the beginning of the war, but it was not final, since the process of developing the Soviet operational plan continued. The version that "the document was based on a defensive strategy" has no basis. The fact is that it clearly stated: "The attack on 12.6". And further: "However, as is known, on June 12, no hostile actions were taken against Germany by the USSR" [750].

Of course, it was not, because they were not planned then. Most likely, this date served as a countdown point for the developers of the MP-41 mobplan to determine the timing of the calendar plan for the implementation of its main activities. Vatutin used the words "Offensive to start 12.6" to emphasize that by this date all measures to bring troops to combat readiness, including their concentration and mobilization, should be practically completed. Therefore, the MP-41 readiness date, as always, was initially set with a margin - May 1. The above-mentioned calculations for the concentration of troops of the KOVO, taking into account the capacity of the railways, were the answer to this requirement.

Instead of deriving a possible period of a preemptive strike from the state of readiness of the headquarters and troops intended to "destroy" the enemy, some historians and publicists refer to the control dates to which the implementation of measures for the preparation of the MP-41 mobplan was tied. At the same time, they point-blank do not see (or do not want to see) the difficulties and difficulties that the troops, headquarters and local military authorities encountered in this case.

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management. In connection with this, the initial deadlines for the readiness of the mobplane had to be postponed. But even they turned out to be far from reality. If a pre-emptive strike was planned, why didn't preparations begin earlier? On the contrary, immediately after the completion of the hard work on the development of the March "Plan ...", it finally became possible to draw up a vacation plan for the officers of the Operational Directorate of the General Staff of the Red Army for 1941, which was approved by the then head of the department, Lieutenant General Malandin on March 31. It included 69 management employees. According to the schedule, 8 commanders were supposed to go on vacation: in April - 8 commanders, in May - 6, in the summer - 27 (and this is in the midst of "planning" the operation!), the remaining 28 in autumn and winter [751]. And only on May 15, Zhukov and Timoshenko realized it, offering to preempt the enemy in striking.

Meanwhile, in the center and in the localities, the development of the mobilization plan was behind schedule. According to the MP-40 mob plan, the creation of the newly formed units should have been completed by May 1, 1941, and completely

sinter their materiel only to | October 1941. Extract from the instructions to the headquarters of the ZapOVO on the development of a mobplane:

39. The development of recruitment plans and applications for transportation, the registration of persons liable for military service and the development of documents for the mob plan should be carried out within the time limits established by the calendar plan for the development of a new mob plan (Appendix No. 12).

The deadline for the development of the mobplane, established by directive L No. 00Org / 1/107476, by the People's Commissar of Defense, was extended until 1.7.1941 (highlighted by us. - Auth.).

40. In order to encrypt and distinguish from the current mob plan, a postscript on the development of a new mob plan should be kept with the name according to "MP-194b.

<...>

44. Report on the progress of the calendar work plan for the development of a new mobplan to:

- a) April 10, 1941 with a report on readiness for registration;
- c) May 15, 1941 with a report on the completion of registration;
- c) June 15, 1941 on the development of a mobplan for military units and military registration and enlistment offices.

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45. By July 15, 1941, submit a report on the mobilization readiness of the district troops to the People's Commissar of Defense" [752].

So, by July 15, the ZAPOVO was only supposed to submit a report on the mobilization readiness of the district troops. It was to this date that Meltyukhov had to tie the time of inflicting a hypothetical preemptive strike against Germany. True, he notes that it is impossible to establish the reason for the postponement of the attack "due to the state of the source base" [753]. And he quotes the words of Molotov, the second person in the Soviet hierarchy after I.V. Stalin:

"I don't remember all the motives for canceling such a decision. But it seems to me that the flight to England of Hitler's deputy for the party, Rudolf Hess, played the main role here. Intelligence of the NKVD informed us that Hess, on behalf of Hitler, offered Great Britain to make peace and take part in a military move against the USSR ... If at that time we ourselves had unleashed a war against Germany, moving our troops to Europe, then England would have without delay would have entered into an alliance with Germany ... And not only England. We could find ourselves one on one in the face of the entire capitalist world..." [754].

Since the "source" could not be found, the

It was necessary to find a suitable date for a meeting of the military at Stalin's, during which the question of a new date for the completion of military preparations could be decided. M. Meltyukhov stopped at the date of such a meeting on May 24, stipulating that "on such a serious issue, we are forced to confine ourselves to this working hypothesis, which has yet to be confirmed or refuted on the basis of drawing on new, as yet inaccessible documents" [755].

Maybe, instead of looking for a black cat in a dark room, it was still worth assessing the real readiness of the Red Army troops to conduct a large-scale offensive.

Molotov's words once again demonstrate that the top Soviet leadership, a few days before the start of the German aggression, could not figure out who was then the mortal enemy of the USSR, and who could become his friend. Traditional anti-English sentiments made them consider England a potential ally of Germany against the USSR And this in the conditions of the war between England and Germany, which by that time had lasted almost two years!

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Noah operation, and even against such a serious enemy as the Wehrmacht? Meanwhile, M. Melgyukhov, arguing about the possibility of the Red Army to deliver a preemptive strike, notes:

"It is impossible to unequivocally answer the question of whether the Red Army was well prepared for the offensive, since in reality it had to repel the German attack. True, the fact that the Soviet troops managed not only to survive in 1941, but also to turn the tide of hostilities and win the war, certainly testifies in favor of the good preparation of the Red Army" [756]. e

Let's leave the thesis about the army that won the war in 1945 aside for now. But we already know something about the state of mobilization and combat readiness of the Red Army by June 1941. The reports of the commanders on the readiness of the unit (connection) for mobilization did not mean at all that they were really ready for mobilization. Examples have been given above. These reports usually indicated the shortage of personnel (even according to peacetime states, which was not included in the calculation of the needs), weapons, military equipment, vehicles, and various kinds of inconsistencies in the planning of the supply (reception) of mobile resources. Depending on this, the headquarters of the districts drew conclusions about the readiness for mobilization and the reality of the timing of bringing the units to full combat readiness. In PribOVO, they were not afraid to draw real conclusions on serious grounds about the unpreparedness of some formations and units for mobilization within the specified time frame. And in the ZAPOVO, despite the reports of the unit commanders about unresolved issues, the senior commander after some time (for example, a few days before the new 1941), as a blueprint, gave an opinion (with rare exceptions) about their readiness [757]. Considering

confusion in connection with the reorganization of the organizational structure of the troops and the redeployment of units, it was hardly possible to eliminate all the shortcomings in mobilization readiness. At the same time, one cannot discount the numerous facts of fraud on the part of the commanders, who, for various reasons, embellished the state of combat and mobilization readiness of their units [758]. Apparently, supporters of preparing a preemptive strike against German troops have a poor idea of what combat readiness of troops for military

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combat operations and their combat effectiveness, which depends on the actual terms of mobilization and measures for their combat, technical and logistic support.

M. Meltyukhov goes on to say that the German command, due to an accidental confluence of circumstances (?!), managed to forestall the completion of the deployment of the Soviet troops and thereby create favorable opportunities for seizing the strategic initiative at the beginning of the war. As a result, the Red Army, which was completing its concentration and deployment in the theater of operations, was taken by surprise and, at the moment of the German attack, was not ready for any immediate action, neither defensive nor even offensive [759].

Then, as an alternative, M. Meltyukhov considers a hypothetical option - how events could have developed if the Soviet leadership had carried out its original plan and on June 12, 1941 would have delivered a surprise attack on Germany at a time when German troops were still completing their concentration near the Soviet borders. By this date, 81.6% of the divisions that were intended for the invasion had already been deployed in the strip from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea. But the Wehrmacht at that time, according to Meltyukhov, had neither a defensive nor an offensive grouping, and a Soviet attack at that moment would put him in a very difficult position, allowing him to smash his forces in parts.

Here one can clearly see an attempt by a respected historian to draw an analogy with the sudden invasion of the USSR by the Germans on June 22. In this case, such an attempt is incorrect and hardly appropriate. We should not forget that our troops were opposed by the mobilized and deployed Wehrmacht, which had the combat experience of two victorious campaigns. In addition, Meltyukhov clearly underestimates the capabilities of non-German intelligence. Having discovered preparations for an attack, they would have had time to strengthen the threatened areas and create the grouping they needed. In the event of an unexpected outbreak of war, according to their calculations, the forces belonging to the GA "South" needed approximately 9 days to reach the designated areas. Uda-

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The troops of the GA "Sever" needed about 10 days to reach the designated areas.

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rum in the direction of Kyiv and one-sided envelopment, the Germans intended to encircle the main forces of the Southwestern Front and thereby prevent the Russian attack on Romania. At the same time, they would not have waited for Hitler's April 30th date for the start of the invasion - June 22nd. From the very beginning, hostilities would have acquired a highly maneuverable character, where the undoubted advantage would have been on the German side. At the same time, the German commanders and commanders would not be constrained by the requirements not to allow any provocations.

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Supporters of a preemptive strike are literally mesmerized by the magic of Soviet numerical superiority in manpower and military equipment. After all, the Soviet troops on the Ostrolenka-Karpaty front, according to Meltyukhov's calculations, surpassed the German ones in personnel, the number of divisions, guns and mortars by two or more times, in tanks - by 8.7 times, and in aircraft - by 4.4 times [760]. It is with this superiority in mind that he further describes how successful combat operations of the Soviet troops against an enemy caught unawares could develop. However, this does not take into account the great potential of the Germans to build up forces in the threatened direction.

The most important role in defeating the enemy Meltyukhov plays aviation, which would subject enemy airfields in East Prussia, Poland and Romania to sudden attacks. The general Soviet superiority in aviation made it possible to subject the Luftwaffe airfields in the 250-kilometer border strip to many hours of continuous air assault, which would lead to a significant weakening of the enemy air force and would facilitate the operations of the Red Army ground forces.

We have a great opportunity to compare Meltyukhov's hypothetical reasoning with the real results of the first air operation of the Soviet Air Force in the Patriotic War. The fact is that Finland, which allowed the deployment of German ground troops on its territory, also violated the status of a neutral power several times between June 22-25. So, on June 23, at 0345 hours, 14 German bombers taking off from East Prussia dropped into the waters of the fairway between Kronstadt and

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Leningrad 28 magnetic sea mines, after which they landed at the Finnish airfield Utti [761]. There was no doubt that the Finns would take the side of Germany.' In order to prevent raids from Finnish airfields on Leningrad and other objects, the Soviet leadership decided to launch a sudden massive strike on them.

The task of the Air Force of the Northern Front was set by the directive of the Headquarters of the Civil Code of June 24:

"<...> by continuous raids day and night, destroy enemy aircraft and eliminate airfields in the region of the southern coast of Finland" [76.3].

According to the plan, 12 bomber and 5 fighter air regiments were to take part in the first strike at dawn, in which there were 375 bombers and 165 fighters, in total 540 aircraft. But only about 300 (55%) managed to fly out. During June 25, when the USSR was not yet at war with Finland, 460 sorties were made, of which 236 were bomber sorties. According to the reports of the crews, they destroyed 30 Finnish aircraft at 18 airfields and shot down 11 in air battles. Our losses amounted to 24 bombers and 4 fighters [762]. For six days in June, 992 sorties were made against 39 Finnish airfields (some of them were subjected to 8-10 raids). As a result of the first such large-scale operation of the Soviet Air Force, according to the reports of our pilots, they managed to destroy 70 Finnish aircraft, while losing about 40 of their own. © taking into account the most optimistic reports of the crews, the number of destroyed and damaged enemy aircraft reached 130, and among them were not only Finnish, but also German aircraft. Considering that Finland then had 225 combat aircraft in service, it can be stated that she suffered significant damage [764].

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The German Ambassador in Moscow, F. Schulenburg, who handed a note declaring war to People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs Molotov on the morning of June 22, asked to evacuate German citizens through Iran, citing the fact that "travel across the western border is impossible, since Romania and Finland, together with Germany, also must come forward" [762].

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However, real Finnish losses turned out to be incomparable with Soviet data. It turns out that on the first day only one captured Soviet SB bomber [765] was damaged by Soviet bombs. At the same time, one Finnish fighter crashed during a forced landing, another crashed on takeoff, and several more received bullet holes in air battles. On June 28, during an emergency landing, another of their fighters crashed. In total, 12-15 Finnish aircraft were damaged to varying degrees during the period from 25 to 30 June. Only one of them had to be repaired for more than a year, while the rest quickly returned to service [766].

The main reason for the low effectiveness of attacks on airfields was the lack of reliable reconnaissance

information, poor crew training, their inability to find the right targets. Finnish cities suffered much more from the Soviet bombs. So, on June 25, 13 civilians were killed in Turku, and another 29 were injured [767]. The next day, this city was hit even harder, with 114 people killed and about 500 injured, most of them civilians.

During the same six days, Soviet aviation irrevocably lost 20 fighters and 51 bombers. At the same time, more than 100 pilots were killed, including 5 squadron commanders [768]. Not all of these aircraft were shot down or crashed. Fighter I-153, piloted by junior lieutenant V.I. Pozdnyakov, obviously, lost his bearings and landed on Finnish territory at 8 am on June 25. Not wanting to surrender, the pilot shot himself, and his perfectly serviceable plane went to the Finns as a trophy [769].

The raids on airfields and cities, the casualties among the Finnish population, were immediately used by the aggressive circles in Helsinki as a convenient pretext for officially declaring war on the Soviet Union.

An air operation with such insignificant results at the cost of such heavy losses cannot be called successful. And the German Air Force significantly surpassed the Finnish aviation in the quantity and quality of the materiel and in the combat experience of the pilots. We must not forget that their planes were based far from the border and flew to

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forward airfields only the day before the attack. Given the stronger German air defense, whose units also had combat experience, there is no reason to hope for more effective actions of our aviation against the Luftwaffe, not to mention the seizure of air supremacy.

M. Meltyukhov, on the other hand, expressed regret that Stalin had missed his chance with a surprise attack to radically change the situation at the beginning of the war in our favor. What is the basis for his confidence in the success of our preemptive strike in the southwestern direction is completely incomprehensible. On the quantitative superiority of the Red Army in technology? Recall that the troops of the Southwestern and Southern Fronts, slightly inferior to the GA "South" in terms of the number of personnel, but far superior to it in the number of divisions, guns and mortars and aircraft (six times in tanks!), nevertheless suffered defeat in the Kiev direction at the end of June 1941 (see Appendix 10). From our point of view, Stalin did not have such a chance, the ion himself understood this very well. Therefore, not only was he not going to attack first, but he also strove at all costs to push back the time of the inevitable clash as far as possible.

The political and military leadership of the USSR, of course,

knew that a fight with Nazi Germany could not be avoided, so they prepared for the war, and prepared seriously. But it took a lot of time to eliminate the major shortcomings of the Red Army, which were so clearly manifested in the war with Finland, and to carry out the planned reorganization of the armed forces and re-equip them with new equipment. To get involved in the war in 1941 with an army in the process of massive reorganization and rearmament was simply unprofitable. Time was definitely working for the USSR at that time. Therefore, everything was done to delay the war and provide the most favorable conditions for the entry of the USSR into it in this case. According to V.M. Molotov, preparations for the inevitable war with Germany were carried out by:

"Otherwise, why did we have to transfer a total of seven armies from the depths of the country to the western border military districts back in May? This is a great power! Why conduct a secret mobilization of eight

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hundreds of thousands of conscripts and move them to the borders as part of the reserve divisions of the military districts? [770].

At the same time, Molotov admitted that they "did not know for sure" the time for the German attack and did everything to delay the war. And as a result: "Time was lost, Hitler was ahead of us. The question is, in what way was he ahead of us? Usually, these words of Molotov are interpreted unequivocally - he got ahead in the attack. Molotov is not a military man (what seven armies is he talking about?) In the conversation, he did not consider it necessary to clarify in what way Hitler was ahead of them - in deployment or in concentration. Or did he mean the completion of the reorganization and rearmament of the army? Ahead and that's it. Such a vague formulation leaves a wide field for interpretation.

This is what the proponents of a preemptive strike take advantage of. They emphasize in every possible way the readiness of the Red Army to strike such a blow, even with available forces - they called in the henchmen. Their irrepressible imagination, with which they try to fool the readers, is simply amazing. The fact that in many tank divisions there are neither tanks nor motor-tractor equipment, and in artillery regiments - means of traction, they do not take into account (probably, they hope to replenish the troops at the expense of trophies). For example, M. Solonin suggested that Stalin decided to attack Germany on June 22, 1941. To prove it, he uses the text of the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, which said: "Consider June 23, 1941 as the first day of mobilization." According to his delusional version, Stalin, it turns out, planned a series of provocations for June 22 with the bombing of Soviet cities by Soviet pilots on German planes, allegedly specially purchased for this purpose. On the same day, a plan was put into effect to cover the state border with a simultaneous strike by the Red Army Air Force on pre-planned targets in the adjacent territory. Soviet troops inflict a sudden blow on the Wehrmacht groupings, concentrated near the Soviet border. And a week later (July 1-3)

the fully mobilized and deployed troops of the four Soviet fronts go over to a victorious full-scale offensive [771]. Alas! Hitler preempted Stalin.

The epigones of Rezun consider all measures to strengthen the defense with the deadlines for their implementation from May 15 and later as preparation for delivering a preemptive strike against Germa

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research institutes. But in logic there is a rule: "After this - does not necessarily mean that because of this." So the decision of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR on the conscription for training camps of 975,870 conscripts liable for military service was tied to the aforementioned note only because the conscription was proposed to begin on May 15. At the same time, THEY "forget" to mention that the Decree on conscription was approved by the Politburo of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks on March 8, 1941. Approved, which means that all the calculations and the draft decree were being prepared in February, when no one was talking about any war in the summer of 1941 in the USSR didn't really think about it. Therefore, the call for training camps was originally supposed to be carried out sequentially, in several queues from June 1 to October 20, with the involvement of 903,806 people. 61 rifle divisions and other units of the Red Army were involved in the training camp. At the same time, it was planned to start the third round of training in reserve rifle divisions from September 5 to October 20, 1941. The recruits were called up: for formations and units, except for sapper, construction, motor transport, for 45 days (a total of 754,896 people), for the latter - 60 days, and for airfield engineering battalions - for 90 days. The purpose of the fees is simple and clear. We had millions of conscripts who had never received military training. They had to be made from scratch. Others were supposed to be retrained in the Spirit of modern requirements. If we trace the dynamics of the originally planned conscription, stretched over five months, it did not differ much from the training camps held in previous years. Establishing the exact dates for their implementation was entrusted to the military councils of the districts [772]. At the same time, they were allowed, taking into account the interests of the national economy and local conditions, to make changes to the indicated dates for the collection and to the number of people involved in each connection and separate part, but not exceeding the total number of people involved in the collection. Moreover, unit commanders were instructed to inform the heads of industrial enterprises, collective farms and state farms in advance of the forthcoming recruitment of persons liable for military service from these enterprises and farms to training camps. What kind of covert mobilization is this, which, according to the Manual on mob work, should be carried out without making it known to everyone? Reader, obviously

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but he still remembers to what extent and how covert mobilization was carried out under the guise of BUS before the Polish campaign.

According to A.M. Vasilevsky, People's Commissar of Defense fully used the rights granted to him by law to call up certain ages from the reserve to the army to participate in training camps or maneuvers [773]. According to the certificate from the General Staff's Mobupravlenie, training camps were planned to be held in 94 divisions of 14 military districts (the latest start date is 20.8). Thus, in the ZAPOVO, training camps were planned to be carried out only in four divisions of three rifle corps of district subordination, starting from June 1. In KOVO, 26 divisions were involved in the training camp: three - from 15.5, 12 - from 20.5, 9 - from 1.6 and one - 15.7; in the Moscow Military District (10 divisions were involved) the beginning of the training camp - from 15.6, the last three divisions - 10.8; vLenVO (4 divisions) beginning - from 5.7, the last - from 15.8. In the divisions of the military districts located in the depths of the country, the collections basically began on June 1 [774]. By the way, according to M.V. Zakharov, by June 22, more than 30 thousand people left the troops after the completion of the training camp. Therefore, it is completely unjustified to believe that the decision to call for training, adopted on March 8, concerned precisely the WUS in preparation for a preemptive strike against Germany.

And only in May 1941, taking into account the ongoing, according to Soviet intelligence, concentration of German troops on the territory of the General Government (former Poland), it was decided to increase the number of divisions, artillery units and army departments conducting training camps, and charges themselves start between | to June 15th. This was, to a certain extent, Stalin's concession in response to the insistent demands of the military leadership. How else could one react to the ever-increasing threat from Germany? But even from that moment on, one cannot speak of covert mobilization under the guise of a BUS, since it consists in the planned and timely transition of each individual military unit, headquarters, administration, institution and the entire Red Army from a peacetime organization and staff to a wartime organization and staff. neither. Yes, the staffing of most formations with personnel (by the way, mostly untrained), in which training sessions were held, was brought almost to the state level

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wartime. But only. And the transition to wartime states was not carried out. To do this, it was necessary to equip the formations with vehicles, traction equipment, horse trains, and carry out other measures.

According to the reports of the military districts, in fact, training camps were held in 99 rifle divisions, in part of which 493,181 people were called up. Due to collections, the number of rifle formations in the border districts was increased: in 21 divisions to 14 thousand people, in 72 to 12 thousand, and in 6 to 11 thousand people. Completed other parts. For example, 8,100 people were called up for training in 47 artillery regiments of the ARGC (out of 55 existing ones). In total, by June 22, 802,138 people were at the training camp in the Red Army, which was 17.7% of

the total strength of the peacetime army (17.4% of the mobilization requirement). That is, before the start of the war, somewhat less than a fifth of it [775] was called up to Warmia.

However, let us return to the note [of the General Staff of May 15. [generalary mii M.A. Gareev, justifying the miscalculation of our command in determining the possible main attack of the enemy, believes that "it was not as decisive as it is portrayed" (hereinafter, it is emphasized by us. - Auth.). He's writing:

"In addition, the direction of concentration of the main efforts by the Soviet command was chosen not in the interests of a strategic defensive operation (such an operation was simply not envisaged - and this was one of the serious mistakes), but in relation to completely different methods of action, when the western military districts after short-term reflection of the enemy invasion and the completion of the mobilization of the army had to go on the offensive. But for such a method of action, which did not take place, the above-mentioned option of concentrating in the South-Western direction was quite reasonable and more profitable than in the Western direction. The main blow in the south-west ran through more advantageous terrain, cut off Germany from the main allies, oil, and brought our troops to the flank and rear of the enemy's main grouping" [776].

What an argument! Based on the afterthought, you can think of a lot! It turns out that sometimes it is useful to be wrong even in such important matters as determining the direction of the main

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th blow of the enemy. But the trick is that the developers of our strategic plans did not know where the enemy concentrated his main forces! And those who knew or assumed were forced to remain silent. As a result of the miscalculation made in determining the possible main blow

enemy regrouping formations of the 19th and 16th armies in order to strengthen the western strategic direction, it had to be carried out with a great delay along the front under enemy air strikes and brought into battle in parts as the echelons arrived. R

It is known that the note "Considerations <...>" dated May 15, 1941, which we are discussing, was accompanied by a whole set of maps:

1. deployment scheme on the map 1:1 000 000 in | copy;
2. cover deployment schemes on 3 maps;
3. Scheme of the ratio of forces | copy;
4. three maps of air force bases in the west.

Unfortunately, these cards are still secret.

and are inaccessible to unbiased researchers. Because of this, they are deprived of the opportunity to argue their conclusions and versions. In addition, M.A. In the same 1991, Gareev admitted that in order to maintain the notorious "secrecy", even the maps and diagrams of the strategic and operational situation in the military-historical works developed after the war were "barely emasculated and only numerous arrows remained on them." And they continue to wander from one publication to another, causing bewildered questions and disputes among historians. Because from these maps and diagrams it is impossible to get an adequate idea of the groupings of our troops, their composition and position, the numbering of formations and formations. This means that it is impossible to draw correct conclusions about the actual correlation in the forces and means of the parties, the possible (or real) results and the significance of this or that plan or this or that operation. And suddenly in the article "Truth and lies about the beginning of the war. Was Stalin preparing a preemptive strike against Germany in 1941? Gareev literally writes: "For the first time we publish the map attached to Zhukov's note dated May 15, 1941" [777].

Here is this map-scheme, or rather, only a published fragment, from which you can get only the most general idea of the deployment of the main forces of the Red Army

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in the West. It indicates the composition of the border districts, but does not show the areas of concentration of reserve armies (outlined

we are only the direction of their advancement from the depths of the country).

The arrows indicating the directions of the strikes of the Southwestern and Western fronts are shown only to the depth of their immediate tasks. At the same time, the left wing of the Western Front shows the strike of the 10th Army instead of the 13th, as suggested in the note of the General Staff. But in the future, the troops of the Red Army had to fight to advance hundreds of kilometers, up to the borders of East Prussia. |

But the most interesting thing is that the diagram shows the composition of all three enemy army groups, about which, by May 15, our command, apparently, had no idea. For example, the actual composition of Army Group Center on June 22, 1941 was surprisingly very accurately determined: 50 divisions, including 9 tank and 6 motorized. There is only one mistake: instead of a separate motorized regiment, the scheme lists two MBRs. It is impossible to fully establish the composition of the remaining army groups from the fragment. But there can be no doubts in this regard - their composition is also close to the real one. :

The diagram also clearly shows the position of the 2nd and 3rd Panzer Groups on the flanks of Army Group Center, which opposes the Zap OVO with its 44 divisions. The idea of the enemy is clear at a glance! And all this was known by May 15? Incredible! Are they hiding from us that by the middle of May they already knew about the composition of army groups and tank groups, even if not on the border, but in the depths? What kind of preemptive strike could be thought of, knowing about such a grouping of the enemy? It was necessary to urgently take measures to strengthen the western strategic direction.

What do you want researchers to think about this? The first thing that comes to mind is that the scheme was made in our time and, contrary to M.A. Gareev, is not a copy of the 1st scheme attached to the note dated May 15. And we have before us yet another example of the conscious dissection of documents on the basis of post-knowledge, with the aim of demonstrating the superiority of the enemy in forces. In fact, on May 5, the Germans had 71 divisions near the border with the USSR, including three tank divisions, two of them in Romania [778]. Comput

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it was absolutely impossible to determine the area of concentration of tank groups according to the location of these divisions, even if some seer had guessed that they would be created at all. The transfer to the east of the rest of the German 14 panzer and 12 motorized divisions from the mobile forces began only on June 6 and was completed only four days before the start of the war.

And I would like to look at the original diagram attached to the note in order to once again try to assess the reality of the proposed plan of action for the Soviet troops. For comparison, we present diagram 8 (on the tab), which shows one

variant of the actions of the Soviet troops in delivering a preemptive strike. For clarity, this diagram is superimposed on the directions of the strikes of the German troops, according to the plan "Barbarossa".

Supporters of a preemptive strike by the forces of the South-Western Front, in cooperation with the troops of the left wing of the Western Front, believe that it would inevitably lead to success. The calculation is based on the fact that the general superiority in forces and means over the enemy created in the southwestern direction (152 Soviet divisions against 100 German divisions) and the surprise attack will allow the Red Army to seize the initiative and, already in the course of carrying out the immediate tasks of both fronts, defeat the border grouping of the Wehrmacht, prepared for the invasion of the territory of the USSR. The first strategic goal of the operation was to defeat the main forces of the German army, deployed south of the Brest-Demblin line, and reach the front of Ostrolenka, r. Narew, Lovich, Lodz, Kreuzburg Oppeln, Olomouc. Thus, the most important strategic task was solved: to cut off Germany from the Balkans and, first of all, from Romanian oil, which was vital for her. Further, the Red Army had to fight through the entire territory of the former Poland and reach the borders of Germany, cutting off East Prussia from it. Impressive concept, to say the least.

According to the plans for strategic and operational deployment, the number of western border districts for wartime was determined at the level of 6.5 million people, and in fact there were about 3 million. In May, both fronts - the South-Western Front and the Western Front - had only 102 divisions in their composition. Of the 104 Soviet divisions that were supposed to make up the shock

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groupings of fronts, 27 were transferred from internal military districts. It took at least another two months, or even three, to create the required overall one and a half superiority in divisions over the enemy. After all, the plan for a radical increase in the throughput capacity of railways (developing second tracks, building military sites for loading and unloading, providing fuel, etc.) was never fully implemented. Running a little ahead, we note that by June 22, a little more than a month later, only 9% of the troops intended for operations in the Western Theater had arrived in the deployment zones of the fronts. Without mobilized and deployed groupings of troops, there was nothing to think about a preemptive strike.

Soviet troops could count on success only if they managed to deliver a sudden blow. However, given the activity of German air reconnaissance and the presence of numerous agents in our rear, it would hardly have been possible to hide the preparation of the strike and take the Wehrmacht by surprise. The enemy would take appropriate measures to strengthen his grouping. In any case, the German commanders, accustomed to independence, would not ask Berlin whether they should open fire on the Russians.

And Hitler and Goebbels would have made full use of our attempt to organize a furious propaganda campaign against the Bolshevik aggression.

According to the option adopted by the General Staff, it was expected that the enemy would also deliver the main blow in the Southwestern strategic direction - with forces of up to 100 divisions deployed south of the Brest-Demblin line in the direction of Kovel, Rovno, Kiev, as well as in the directions of Munkach, Lvov and Sanok. No wonder five of the ten newly formed anti-tank brigades of the RGK were concentrated on the Southwestern Front.

The troops of the 6th, 26th and 21st armies, according to the proposal of the General Staff, went on the offensive from the line (in the sector) Senyava, Przemyśl, Lutowski. To the right, to the south of Vlodava, the troops of the 5th and 20th armies went on the offensive - just in front of the superior forces of the Army Group "South", prepared to strike in the direction of Kovel, Lutsk, Kiev. The troops of the SWF, rushing towards Krakow,

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Lublin, would inevitably expose their right flank to the enemy. Depending on the development of the situation, the Germans could launch strong counterattacks on the right wing of the advancing front grouping or later go on a counteroffensive with forces concentrated in the Radom area before our command could bring deep reserves into battle. This could lead to the effect of "revolving doors" with access to the rear of the Soviet troops, wedged in the direction of the main attack. Under these conditions, in a battle with a much more experienced and skilled enemy, the initial success of the SWF troops could turn into a major defeat. After that, there would no longer be any forces capable of blocking the Germans' path in the Kiev direction.

But there was one more important circumstance, which the supporters of a preemptive strike with such decisive goals do not take into account. The fulfillment of the planned deep tasks was practically not provided financially. This concerned, first of all, the supply of troops with ammunition and fuel. For example, a note dated May 15 contains an eloquent note: "Fuel reserves destined for the western military districts are echeloned in significant quantities (due to lack of capacity in their territories in the internal districts)" [779]. How far they were echeloned can be judged from the ZapOVO, the main fuel reserves of which were stored in Maykop, in the North Caucasus, that is, several thousand kilometers from the areas of impending battles.

By June 1941, the Wehrmacht significantly surpassed in the ability to fight not only the Red Army, but also all the other armies of the world. The advantage of the German army in the conduct of mobile warfare was especially strongly felt. With the existing balance of forces in the southwestern

rule, the offensive of our troops, even with the introduction of strategic reserves into battle, would at best develop into protracted battles. But this would objectively prove more advantageous to the enemy, whose troops of Army Group Center would inevitably achieve even greater success in the direction of Minsk, Smolensk. In the considered conditions of the summer of 1941], taking into account the real state of the combat and mobilization readiness of the Red Army, hope for success proactively

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th blow - the height of naivety. The best confirmation of this outcome is the defeat of the troops of the South-Western Front in the largest tank battle of the Second World War in the Dubno region.

Although some advantages in the preparation of a preemptive strike and in its delivery, even with available forces, can be seen if desired. Prior to the start of hostilities, it would be possible to eliminate shortcomings in the organization of communications in advance, organize interaction and command and control of troops in advance. This would allow the troops of the first strategic echelon to enter the war in a more or less organized manner. The command and troops would have avoided the psychological shock that they experienced as a result of a surprise attack by the Germans (this is often forgotten to take into account). During the implementation of the first operations in the country, mobilization would have been carried out in full. It is possible that at first it would have been possible to avoid such large-scale encirclements that led to enormous losses in people, weapons and military equipment. The troops of the second strategic echelon would enter the battles better prepared. But all this looks like pluses only in comparison with the scale of the defeat of the troops of the border districts in the initial period of the war, which we now know about. But Stalin and the military leadership on the eve of the war could not even think about it.

The results of a thorough analysis of the qualitative state of the Wehrmacht and Soviet troops, the combat training and combat effectiveness of the latter allow us to draw an unambiguous conclusion that, regardless of someone's wishes, the personnel Red Army was not ready to launch a preemptive strike against Germany either in the summer or in general during 1941. Therefore, Stalin, being a sane person, could not agree with the course of action proposed by the General Staff, neither for military-strategic, nor even more so for political reasons, and did everything possible and impossible to delay the start of the war, even to the detriment of the country's security.

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During the counterattack of the South-Western Front on June 26-29, 1941, in the Dubno region, five mechanized corps (8, 9, 15th, 19th and 22nd MK, over 3100 tanks in total). Our troops

despite the successful actions of individual formations, they suffered a major defeat there, losing up to 85% of their tanks.

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WHY WAS THE SECOND STRATEGIC ECHELON CREATED?

This section title is taken from the book by V. Suvorov (Rezun), but please do not rush to accuse the authors of plagiarism. Although the section, for the sake of truth, should be called like this: "Why was the Second Strategic Echelon not created?" But more on that below. And the question is really important. It is not for nothing that the "resunists" pay special attention to it, considering the advance of the Soviet reserve armies from the depths of the country as the main and irrefutable evidence that the plan proposed in the note "Considerations ..." was approved, and the Red Army was preparing to deliver a preemptive strike. .

Rezun bluntly states that "<...> no one can give an explanation other than him for the advancement of the second strategic echelon in May 1941 (emphasized by us. - Auth.):

"Icebreaker" I wrote for the sake of one question. This question is in chapter 26. The previous chapters are just a hint. The main question of the book was written in capital letters. For the dull ones, he also added: here it is - the central question. He asked his future critics not to strum trifles, but to take the ram by the horns - to answer the main question" [780]. "This question is formulated in the very title of the 26th chapter of the Icebreaker: "Why was the Second Strategic Echelon created?" And further: "Communist historians are ready to discuss any details and look for any errors. But let's digress from minor details and give an answer to the main question" [781].

Let's. Much depends on a correct understanding of the purpose and role of the second strategic echelon. Therefore, first about the term itself - "echelon". Otherwise, it will be difficult for an unprepared reader to unravel the intricacies of lies heaped up by Rezun around the question of the composition, timing and procedure for the advancement of Soviet reserve armies. An echelon is an element of battle order (for tactical units and formations) or operational formation (for formations). Depending on the plan for a battle (operation) and the availability of forces in a combat (operational) formation, there may be several echelons located one after the other. The strategic echelon is part of the armed forces of the state,

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designed to solve strategic problems in the war. The need to create second strategic echelons first arose with the advent of mass armies, when it became impossible to achieve victory in a war in one general battle. In peacetime, the armed forces, usually contained in a relatively limited composition, are

lay the first strategic echelon. With the outbreak of war (with the announcement of mobilization), a second strategic echelon is deployed under its cover, the composition of which practically never remains constant. So, Soviet armies were formed and brought into it literally in the last days before the war and even after it began. The number of compounds included in them also changed, and more than once. Indeed, even before the start of the war, the Soviet command began to form reserve armies and push them out of the internal military districts and the Far East in a westerly direction. Under the circumstances, these were quite understandable precautions. They became a response to the concentration of Wehrmacht forces near the Soviet borders that began in late February 1941. The second strategic echelon was to become a powerful tool in the hands of the High Command of the Red Army, capable of making a decisive change in the course of the war. In the event of its launch, the reserve armies from the composition of the second strategic echelon were intended to make up for the losses of the active army, support and build up the efforts of the fronts in the most important strategic and operational areas, including in case of elimination (localization) of enemy breakthroughs, as well as to solve other sudden emerging tasks in the course of hostilities. The reserve armies were also transferred to the Western theater of operations in order to use them at the right time and in the right place. Later we will talk about other important reasons for the decision to move them closer to the western borders. Let us consider in more detail the process of creating the second strategic echelon, relying, unlike Rezun, on reliable facts and documents. On April 26, the General Staff issued a preliminary order to prepare troops for dispatch to the west to the Far Eastern districts. In "Considerations..." by Timoshenko and Zhukov, which appeared no earlier than May 15, the proposed Soviet grouping of reserves of the High Command

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vaniya was to consist of five armies, including 47 divisions. Vyazma, Sychevka, Yelnya, Bryansk, Sukhinichi were chosen as the areas of concentration of two of them, which had a total of 15 divisions. Another army of eight divisions was to be deployed in the area of Vileyka, Novogrudok, Minsk. The remaining two armies were intended for Ukraine. The first, consisting of 12 divisions, was assigned to the area of Shepetovka, Proskurov, Berdichev, and the second, from the same number of formations, to the area of Belaya Tserkov, Zvenigorodka, Cherkasy [782]. Thus, three out of five armies (almost half of the 47 divisions put forward) were assigned destination areas in the Western strategic direction. Of these, two were supposed to be concentrated behind the ZapOVO, quite far behind the rear, and the third was located within this district. The remaining two, the most powerful in composition (24 divisions), were concentrated within the KOVO, given that the main attack was planned in the southwestern direction. Since Stalin did not agree with the proposals of the General Staff, the second strategic echelon of the Red Army was created in a completely different way. From May 13 to May 22, the General Staff

ordered the start of the advancement of four armies (the 16th from the ZabVO, the 19th from the North Caucasus Military District, the 21st from the PriVO and the 22nd from the UrVO) and the 25th sk from the KhVO (transferred to the operational subordination of the 19th army). According to the plan, the troops of the 16th Army, consisting of 12 divisions, were to concentrate in the Proskurov, Khmelnyk area from May 22 to June 1. The 19th Army, consisting of 11 divisions, was planned to be transferred to the Cherkassy region, Belaya Tserkov, Smela by June 10. The first two divisions of this army were to begin unloading on May 20, and three more on June 2-3 [783]. By June 13, 3 divisions of the subordinate 19th Army of the 25th Sc. The task of the 21st Army, which consisted of 14 divisions, was to advance from June 17 to July 2 in the region of Chernigov, Gomel, Konotop. Finally, 6 divisions of the 22nd Army were to arrive at the assembly area of Idritsa, Sebezh, on July 1-3 [784]. Thus, in total it was planned to introduce 46 divisions into the second strategic echelon. As it turned out later, the areas where three of the four reserve armies were heading lay away from the direction of the main attack of the Wehrmacht. Two of them - the 16th and 19th - along with most of the 21st Army were intended as

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reserves for the future Southwestern Front. For the West, only one remained - the 22nd and, besides it, the 63rd sk from the 21st Army. This distribution of forces once again emphasized the exaggerated importance that the Soviet command attached to the southwestern direction.

However, the timing of the preparation of troops for the advancement and transfer lagged behind the planned ones. And very soon the order of advancing and subordinating armies was substantially specified. So, in accordance with NKO directive No. 504206, the commander of the KOVO troops, the 16th Army, already consisting of 6, and not 12 divisions, was ordered to accept a little later - between June 15 and July 10 (the previous deadline was from May 22 to June) [785]. At the same time, the army itself was withdrawn from the reserve of the High Command and entered into complete subordination to the Military Council of the KOVO. At the same time, the 51st sk from the 22nd army and the 63rd sk from the 21st, arriving in the ZapoVO from June 17 to July 2, according to directive No. 504207, were not included in the district troops, and its Military advice was not obeyed [786].

It should be borne in mind that the areas assigned to the armies did not necessarily have to coincide with the actual areas of their concentration. This is a common practice: there was no time to wait, the main thing was to organize the loading of troops as soon as possible and start regrouping. Thus, the divisions of the 19th, 21st and 22nd armies began advancing in May, even before the formation of the directorates of the armies themselves and their army units. For example, the commander of the 19th Army (Lieutenant General I.S. Konev) and its chief of staff (Major General P.N. Rubtsov) were appointed only after the start of the war - on June 26. Approximately at the same time, leading cadres of other reserve armies were appointed. Let us recall that the formation of new armies on the basis of the already existing divisions of the internal military districts began only in June 1941 (except for the 16th Army, formed in

1940). It was from this month that the 18th, 19th, 20th, 21st and 22nd armies began to count their biography [787]. The process of transferring a large number of connections was extended in time and space. The chiefs of military echelons, as a rule, did not have information about destinations. Only the VOSO (military communications) authorities and the military commandants of the junction stations knew this. Depending on the change in the situation, they, at the direction of the General Staff, carried out the redirection of echelons

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certain connections. A typical example: the troops of the 24th Army from the Siberian Military District were planned to be concentrated southwest of Moscow, but the situation that developed with the outbreak of the war demanded that they be sent northwest of the capital. Its commander, Lieutenant General S.A. On June 24, Kalinin was sent by plane with a small task force to a new concentration area (st. Nelidovo, Bely, Dorogobuzh, Gzhatsk, Rzhev) with the task of ensuring the unloading and collection of army troops. So, the head echelon of the army, heading west, after Novosibirsk turned to Semipalatinsk, and then to Alma-Ata. At the same time, Vasilevsky in the General Staff handed over to the commander of the 16th Army, M.F. Lukin maps of the Caucasus and Iran, warning about the movement of his army to the border with Iran. Then the army was turned to the north, and then to the west. The echelon of the army headquarters received the news of the beginning of the war in Novokhopersk [788].

Information on the composition of the fronts and reserve armies as of June 13, 1941, was indicated in the "Information on the Deployment of the Armed Forces of the USSR in the Event of a War in the West," signed by N. Vatutin, Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army. The combat composition of the reserve armies is shown in Table 8.1.

Table 8.1

BATTLE COMPOSITION OF THE RESERVE
ARMIES OF THE HIGH COMMAND AS OF 13.06.41

Source: 1941. In 2 books. Book. 2. S. 359. Note: the table does not reflect changes in the composition of the 16th Army.

The purpose of the reserve armies changed: the 21st Army (its composition decreased by one division), together with the 20th Army, was transferred to the direct subordination of the SWF.

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The 28th and 24th armies were to deploy in the Western strategic direction: one - northwest of Moscow, and the other - southwest. The 22nd Army was reinforced by the 21st Mechanized Corps

catfish from MVO. Thus, significant changes took place in terms of the deployment of reserve armies. Now it is planned to deploy troops of three of the five reserve armies in the Western strategic direction. This expressed the desire of the military leadership to strengthen this direction and increase the composition of the reserves to 51 divisions. But in reality, only 32 divisions could be included in the reserve army group, since the 28th and 24th armies, consisting of 19 divisions, had yet to be formed and transported to designated areas. So, the 24th Army was formed on the basis of the troops of the Siberian Military District on June 24, after the start of the war. On June 27, Lieutenant General S.A. was appointed its commander. Kalinin, who commanded this district. A new army concentration area - northwest of the capital: st. Nelidovo, Bely, Dorogobuzh, Gzhatsk, Rzhev. The 28th Army was formed in the ArchVO even later, by July 1 [789]. On June 27, Lieutenant General V.Ya. was placed at its head. Kachalov, who commanded the troops of this district.

According to Vatutin's reference, the four fronts of the first strategic echelon included 189 divisions and 2 brigades (taking into account the troops stationed in the Crimea), that is, more than 60% of all available formations of the Red Army. The strongest grouping was still created in the SWF zone at the expense of the forces of the KOVO. By June 13, it included 58 divisions (including SD - 32, TD - 16, MD - 8 & IKD - 2). In the next 10-13 days, it was planned to increase it by 20 rifle divisions, transferred from PribOVO, KhVO and OrVO. Taking into account the 19 divisions of the ODVO (sd - 11, td - 4, md - 2, cd - 2), it was planned to increase the total number of divisions in the South-Western Front to 97 instead of 152, planned in the note dated May 15. This is another evidence that the option of inflicting a preemptive strike on Germany by the forces of the SWF was not approved by the political leadership of the country'. The main forces of the Navy

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For the defense of the borders in the Far East, 31 divisions and 2 brigades were allocated, united in the Far Eastern Front and ZabVO. The defense of the southern borders was assigned to the North Caucasus Military District, ZakVO and SAVO, which had a total of 31 divisions. One division was detached to cover the White Sea coast [790].

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The USSR also concentrated in the west as part of the Northern, Baltic and Black Sea fleets.

As yet another "evidence" of the Red Army's preparations for delivering a preemptive strike, the decision to move deep corps and divisions from the western districts closer to the border is used. But this decision was also taken in response to the continued concentration of the Wehrmacht near the western border of the USSR in order to reduce the time for strengthening the armies of the first echelon. Directives from the NGOs and the General Staff in this regard were received by the leadership of the districts on June 12-15 [791]. The fact is that the previously scheduled dates for strengthening the covering armies no longer corresponded to the changed situation. For example, according to the schedule for

the division of the units allocated to the cover troops of the frontier of the ZapOVO of May 29, 1941, the administration of the 13th Army, which was planned to include 11 divisions (sd - 6, td - 2, md - 1, cd - 2), should was to advance to the designated area on the 3rd-4th day of mobilization. The timing of the promotion of other connections: the management of the 21st sk and its 17th sd - on the 5-8th day, and the 50th sd - on the 8-10th day; management of the 47th sk (121st and 155th sd) and 55th sd - on the 4th-7th day. To support the formations of the covering armies, the artillery units of the RGK were advanced on the following dates: the 120th gap of the RGK - on the 4-5th day, the 124th gap of the RGK - on the 3-5th, the 301st gap of the RGK - on 4--7- th, 311th gap RGK - on the 3rd-5th, 5th gap RGK - on the 6-8th day. And only the 375th GAP of the RGK was supposed to become part of the 1st sk of the 10th army immediately after the announcement of the combat alert [792].

The advance was to be carried out secretly, at night, mainly in marching order, accompanied by tactical exercises and completed by July 1, 1941. The order for their advance testified that the top Soviet leadership realized the hopeless lag behind the Red Army from the Wehrmacht in deployment and tried to to make up for lost time. creating conditions for a more reliable cover for the mobilization, concentration and deployment of the main forces of the Red Army. Deep formations from areas located at a distance of 150-400 km from the state border were to be redeployed to a zone remote from it by 20-80 km. In the event of the outbreak of hostilities in the districts, it became possible to form a second opera

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an active echelon behind the back of the troops of the covering armies stretched in a string. The advanced formations were equipped with weapons and equipment according to peacetime states, only replenished at the expense of personnel called up for training camps. They had to take with them all the transportable stocks of firearms and fuels and lubricants. However, due to the shortage of vehicles, this requirement could not be met immediately.

VKOVO, five rifle corps were intended to advance - the 31st, 36th, 37th, 49th and 55th, as well as the 164th rifle division, for a total of 16 divisions. The 2nd, 21st, 44th and 47th rifle corps, which included 12 divisions, were to be relocated to the ZapOVO. It should be noted that some of these formations were assigned concentration areas at a distance of more than 100 km from the border. So, the 44th sk, which included four divisions, was supposed to go to the Baranovichi region, almost one and a half hundred kilometers from it, and the 37th sd from the 21st sk was withdrawn to Lida, from which about 120 km remained to the border [793].

Rezun, as usual, could not do without obvious distortions. According to him, all 114 divisions of the first strategic echelon "began to move towards the borders under the cover of a reassuring TASS message" dated June 13, 1941 [794]. This is inconsistent with

reality: 56 divisions of the covering armies were located near the border and did not move anywhere. Of the rest of the troops of the first strategic echelon, 32 divisions received orders to advance, and even fewer managed to move. Only five of them managed to reach their destination. areas before the start of the war [795].

In order to carry out the regrouping of the Red Army forces outlined in General Vatutin's certificate, it was necessary to additionally plan the transportation by rail of 33 divisions (including 30 rifle divisions, 2 divisions, 1 division), nine directorates of rifle corps, four army directorates, that required about 1300 echelons, and taking into account the parts of the reinforcement and the rear - 1700 echelons. It took about 13 days for their transportation at the rate of 130 echelons per day. Combat units could be transported in 10 days [796]. It is characteristic that military transportation was carried out without

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sharp compaction of the usual work schedule of railways. And by June 22, a significant part of the divisions of the second echelon of the districts and reserve armies was on the move - in echelons or marching columns.

The actual composition of the troops of the second strategic echelon and their condition on the day the war began are shown in Table 8.2:

Table 8.2

BATTLE COMPOSITION OF THE RESERVE
ARMIES AND THE STATUS OF THEIR CONNECTIONS AS OF 22.06.41

Source: [797].

Notes: PPD -
point of permanent deployment; RP - area of
destination.

It can be seen from the data in the table that the 16th and 21st armies were returned to the second strategic echelon, adding the 20th and 24th armies (16 divisions of which did not have time to move) and excluding the 28th army. The total number of divisions in the reserves of the High Command was increased to 57. But of these, only 16 divisions (less than 30%) arrived in the destination areas by June 22 (less than 30%), including one mechanized corps.

' Be commander (since June 27) Lieutenant General V.Ya. Kachalov was ordered to fly to the area of Yelnya, Bryansk, Art. Paliki, Spass Demensk to lead the unloading and collection of army troops. The army headquarters was to immediately go to Kirov, Kaluga region [798].

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pus out of 4 (only four tank divisions out of 10). The remaining three mechanized corps did not budge. Another 10 divisions were on the way. Consequently, in total, at a later date, only 26 divisions participated in the transfer or managed to complete it. Of the aforementioned 939 train echelons for the transportation of the 16th, 21st and 22nd armies, by June 22 only 83 echelons managed to arrive at the terminal stations, another 455 were on the way, and 401 echelon was not even filed for loading [799]. Meanwhile, the time for transportation was calculated from the moment the troops were loaded. At this rate, it took about three more months to transport the rest of the divisions (not counting army and reinforcement units). For comparison: in less than a month, from May 22 to June 18, the Germans successfully transported 52 divisions by rail alone, including 14 tank and 12 motorized divisions. In addition, we note that the troops of the reserve armies advanced in an unmobilized state, only slightly replenished with personnel called up under the guise of training camps. Due to the change in dislocation, the procedure for their mobilization was completely violated, including the timing and points for supplying them with more resources. Subsequently, this complicated the transfer of these units and formations to wartime states.

Now the reader himself can compare the real history of the creation and advancement of reserve armies with the picture that Rezun so colorfully depicted in his opuses:

"On May 13, 1941, seven commanders of the internal military districts (the Moscow Military District is an exception) received a directive of particular importance: to deploy one new army in each of the seven districts, to direct all the headquarters and troops of the districts to the formation of armies, to personally lead the commanders of the districts new armies and exactly one month later, on June 13, 1941, begin regrouping to the west.

<...> In the Siberian Military District (commanded by Lieutenant General S.A. Kalinin), the 24th Army was formed <...>.

' Abandoned in the points of permanent deployment of mobile cells
By June 5, 1941, they were supposed to draw up a plan for receiving horses, wagon trains and mechanized transport and submit applications for the transportation of mobile resources to new areas. The General Staff mistakenly believed that the missing personal

the train, transport and convoys can be timely delivered to the new areas of concentration of divisions.

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One day, June 13, 1941, at the time of the transmission of strange messages on Soviet radio, in endless territories

Central Russia, the North Caucasus, Siberia, the Urals, from Arkhangelsk to the Kuban and from Orel to Chita, the former military-territorial order practically ceased to exist. If a rebellion broke out, then there was nothing to suppress it: ALL divisions went to the German borders. Not only that, but there would be no one to take the decision to suppress: practically all the generals also went secretly to the west" [800]. And further:

"June 13, 1941 is the moment when 77 Soviet divisions of the internal military districts "under the guise of training camps" rushed to the western borders. In this situation, Adolf Hitler did not wait for the Soviet generals to create "the authorized density of seven and a half kilometers per division," and struck first" [801].

Nothing to say, a very impressive picture was drawn by the author, memorable. Let's leave nonsense about some kind of riots on the conscience of the icebreaking masters. But 77 divisions - this is serious, it is a quarter of all divisions that existed at that time in the USSR! And suddenly they all rushed somewhere. And as soon as the Soviet railways were able to withstand this wave of military trains? But here is the order of the General Staff of the Red Army to the commander of the troops of the Siberian Military District on sending to the west the headquarters of the 24th Army, the 52nd and 53rd Rifle Corps dated June 25, 1941:

"Perform transportation:

1. Directorates of 53 sk with corps units, 175, 133 and 107 rifle divisions. Start of loading on 26.6.1941, the general rate is 40 echelons per day.

2. Directorates of 52 sk with corps units, 119, ET and 166 rifle divisions. Beginning of loading on June 29, 1941, the general rate is 40 echelons per day.

3. Office of the army with army units. Beginning of loading on June 29, the general rate is 40 echelons per day.

All destined to the west. N. Vatutin" [502].

These are just the same divisions that, according to Rezun, have already gone to the German border for 2 weeks, led by sa

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mime Kalinin. And they, it turns out, only on the fifth day of the war were to begin loading at a rate of 120 echelons per day for one army. This is how Rezun recruited 77 divisions of the second strategic echelon. Despite the fact that the maximum number of divisions that could enter into its composition never exceeded 57, or a third less than Rezun counted them. But this is only on paper. And to the western borders

all of them at the same time on June 13 could not rush.

Shameless lies from Rezun in almost every line. It turns out that Hitler was frightened when he learned about the advancement of a dozen Russian formations, and therefore decided to launch a preemptive strike on the Soviet Union? But after all, Stalin did not hide their movement: on June 14, a well-known TASS report appeared in the newspapers, which mentioned Soviet military transportation. And Hitler, on April 30, long before the start of the advance of the Soviet reserve armies, set the day for the fall on the USSR.

But why did Rezun count only 77 divisions, and not more? After all, in addition to the reserve armies, by the middle of May, 11 more rifle divisions were transferred to the border districts in bulk, and this is almost two armies! Their units were turned to the formation of ten anti-tank artillery brigades and five airborne corps. Rezun knows about them, at least from the recollections of fighters and commanders, whom he likes to quote. But he is silent, otherwise he would have to explain to readers how ordinary rifle units and subunits suddenly turned into motorized anti-tank (but without vehicles and traction) brigades and into airborne (without parachutes, transport aircraft and gliders) corps.

Rezun asks himself a "question" from the same cheating series - "Why does Stalin need ten airborne corps?" It immediately becomes clear to the reader that Stalin had them, it remains only to find out with the help of the same omniscient guru - why? And Rezun immediately answers himself: in order to land troops in the rear of the Wehrmacht to assist our troops advancing from the front. After all, it was not for nothing that "OVER ONE MILLION well-trained paratroopers-paratroopers" were trained in the Soviet Union by the beginning of World War II [803].

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In fact, in 1940, the Soviet Union had only six airborne brigades, whose insufficiently strong composition did not correspond well to the tasks assigned to them. Only in May 1941 did the formation of five airborne corps (VDK) begin, each with three brigades (2,588 men each), a separate tank battalion, and a communications platoon, totaling 8,013 men [804]. Another, the sixteenth mobile airborne brigade became separate [805]. It is easy to calculate that in the five corps in the state there should have been about 43 thousand fighters and commanders who were not real paratroopers at all. Let's agree that from a person who has ever parachuted from a tower in a park of culture, to a "well-trained paratrooper parachutist" - a huge distance. Only the previously existing 201, 202, 204, 211, 212 and 214 airborne brigades remained really combat-ready. Therefore, the landing of the personnel of the airborne units in the future was supposed to be carried out mainly

landing method - on airplanes and gliders. But by the beginning of the war, it was not possible to equip and provide brigades and corps with military equipment and parachutes, as well as aircraft and gliders for their landing behind enemy lines. So, an order for the manufacture of 2000 pcs. gliders in 1941, with a total capacity of 21.7 thousand people. (including pilots), Chief of the General Staff Zhukov signed only on June 16. The next year another 5,500 gliders were ordered [806]. In the first half of 1941, it was planned to build 100, and in the second, another 200 Li-2 transport planes [807]. Not enough for a million paratroopers. With these airborne corps, hastily formed from ordinary fighters and commanders, and a million mythical paratroopers, as well as understaffed mechanized corps, Rezun surprised ours and frightened foreign inhabitants!

Noting that "the transfer of troops of the Second Strategic Echelon is a railway operation that required lengthy preparations, accurate preliminary planning," Rezun cites the words of the former Deputy Minister of Defense of the USSR (since July 1972) Marshal S.K. Kurkotkina: "<...> The General Staff handed over all the necessary documents for the transportation of troops to the People's Commissariat

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means of communication on February 21, 1941" [808]. These words are from the introduction to the work "The Logistics of the Soviet Armed Forces in the Great Patriotic War 1941-1945"! Rezun uses to conclude that "we should look for the decision to create the Second Strategic Echelon and start planning for its deployment and combat use somewhere earlier. And we are on HoDiM ... ". Who seeks will always find. It turns out: "The creation of troops in the internal districts and their transfer to the western border districts is a process that began on August 19, 1939. Started by the decision of the Politburo, it never stopped, gradually gaining strength" [809]. Here we fully agree with Rezun: the decision to create second echelons in combat and operations, and even in (strategic) war is a common thing. And the countdown can start from any date, even from the time of King Peas!

This is a brief history of the advancement of the reserve armies to create the second strategic echelon of the Red Army, based on information from reliable sources and documents. It, in fact, contains the answer to Rezun's main question, which he put in the title of his main 26th chapter of the Icebreaker - "Why was the Second Strategic Echelon created?" I asked a question, but for some reason I didn't put a question mark. He, like a petty sharpie, replaced the question with a statement. And he even picked up a cunning autograph for the chapter;

"Mobilization is war, and we cannot imagine any other understanding of it."
Marshal of the Soviet Union B.M. Shaposhnikov.

After all, the second strategic echelon, as the reader now knows, by the beginning of the war was practically not created in this way. And not

because Hitler preempted Stalin in the attack. But because the political and military leadership of the Soviet Union took retaliatory measures to the aggressive steps of Germany belatedly. And these measures were inadequate to the growing threat. By the beginning of the war, only 16 divisions arrived in the designated areas of concentration. The strategic reserve of the High Command of this composition, with a front width of more than 1500 km (from the Baltic Sea to the Carpathians), cannot be considered the second strategic echelon of the Red Army. Tem

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In the introduction to this work, it was about the capacity of the railways of the USSR, the availability of steam locomotives and a rolling stock in connection with the development of a mobilization plan for 194] year.

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moreover, during the period under review, there was no talk of mobilization at all.

And so in almost every paragraph. These are not isolated errors that occur from time to time in almost every historian. With Rezun, this has entered the system: it is with the help of such stretches, distortions and outright lies that he substantiates his absurd theories. Here is another typical example of Rezun's irrepressibly violent fantasy. Trying to make the USSR a warmonger, he repeatedly used the theme of "red packets". Referring to Rokossovsky and some other commanders, he writes that "they did not find anything there [in the packages] necessary for defense" [810]. The question is, why assign defense missions to mechanized formations located hundreds of kilometers from the border? On alarm, they advanced to the areas of their operational mission in readiness to launch counterattacks on the enemy who had broken through into the depths of our defense.

But Rezun immediately draws a global conclusion: "the Soviet commanders had plans for war, but there were no plans for a defensive war" [811]. At the same time, he argued: "<...> Of course, the commanders of the tactical level of these tasks had no right to know, but these tasks in higher headquarters were clearly defined and formulated, sealed in secret packages and stored in the safes of each headquarters, up to the battalion inclusive" (highlighted by us. - Auth.) [812]. Rezun is trying to convince the inexperienced reader that the Soviet command could only give a prearranged signal. All commanders and commanders subordinate to them will open the secret packages at once, and the troops of the first strategic echelon of the Bolsheviks will rush in unison against the enemy. And he continues to lie:

"Not a single commander of a front, fleet, army, flotilla, not a single commander of a corps, division, brigade or regiment has NEVER received an order to open a "red package" [813]. And since Hitler preempted Stalin in striking, the contents of the notorious packages remained a secret with seven seals, says Rezun.

The "Red Packages" were formed long before May 15th. They were kept, according to the instructions, by the chiefs of staff of formations and associations in a personal safe along with the mobplane. The commanders of the formations knew the contents of the documents in the packages, as they supervised their compilation. Telegrams

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(conditional signals) to open the "red packets" were given, but very late. The specific content of the documents stored there can even now be found on the example of the "red package" of the 1st sk of the 10th army of the ZapOVO, the documents of which were worked out in January-February 1941. And the combat order of the corps with the assignment of tasks to units and formations was signed 18.2.41 [814]. This package was captured by the Germans, kept in the archives of Danzig, from where it was returned to TsAMO RF. The Germans did not even consider it necessary to translate any of the 46 documents in the package, because they dealt only with defense. Otherwise, Goebbels would not have missed the opportunity to accuse the treacherous Bolsheviks of preparing an attack on Germany.

Rezun, describing the actions of the Wehrmacht and the Red Army, notes that they were very similar, like "<...> a mirror image. The difference is only in time. At first, the Soviet troops acted ahead of schedule, now Hitler is two weeks ahead: he has fewer troops, and they have to be transferred over a very short distance. It is interesting that at the beginning of June the German army was in a very unfavorable position, many troops in echelons" [815].

Let's compare documents. The plan of transportation to ensure the operation "Barbarossa" was signed by the commander-in-chief of the ground forces of the Wehrmacht von Brauchitsch on January 29, 1941 [816]. The advance of the Wehrmacht forces, allocated for the invasion of the USSR, in addition to the 29 divisions that were already in the areas adjacent to the Soviet border, began in February. For the purpose of secrecy, military transportation began at a pace of 12 railway echelons per day. From March 16, it was supposed to double, and on April 11 to reach 48 echelons per day. Shortly before the start of the war, the pace of the transfer of troops had to reach a maximum in order to eliminate the backlog that had accumulated earlier. The final schedule for the transfer of Wehrmacht forces to the borders of the USSR is shown in Table 8.3.

The package has an inscription in German - shpa |: 1 ge Opta | - tarre shO Opztaegteype \$ (VYa (er wop 1-176 digsV pittegpei ipd vepeye!). This can be translated as follows: "Contents: | red genuine folder with genuine orders (sheets from 1 to 176 are numbered

baths and stitched)". This red folder, containing pre-war documents, has now been handed over to the RGVA.

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8 EPIGOVT,

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Thus, in the period from February 20 to May 21, the Germans transferred 43 divisions, and on June 18 - 95. Our troops, having begun to advance only on May 13, by June 22 managed to transfer only 16 divisions to the Western theater! So Rezun is brazenly lying, stating that at first the Soviet troops acted ahead of the curve, and only then the Germans were ahead of them by two weeks. These two weeks were given to Hitler, by which Hitler allegedly managed to get ahead of Stalin. Apparently, Rezun had a crooked mirror when he composed his Icebreaker! It took at least three months to create a second strategic echelon in the originally planned composition (47-57 divisions) with a fixed rate of transportation. At the same time, Rezun directly declares that no one can give an explanation other than him for the movement of the second strategic echelon in May 1941.

Let us try to repeat our arguments in a shorter position.

1. The transfer of Soviet reserve armies to the Western theater of operations is a response to the concentration of German troops near the Soviet border that began in February. Do not consider the leaders of our country as fools. Couldn't they ignore the growing military threat to the USSR, although Stalin did not fully believe that Hitler would dare to start a war on two fronts.

2. The Soviet command, with a great delay - only on April 26 - gave a preliminary order to prepare nine divisions for sending to the west. We emphasize: PRELIMINARY and not about sending, but only about PREPARATION for it. The Soviet General Staff ordered the transfer of the first three armies to the western border from 13 to 22 May. The Germans, however, having begun a mass transfer of troops from February 20, in less than a month - from May 22 to June 18 - transported 52 divisions by rail only, including 14 tank and 12 motorized. So who was ahead of whom from the very beginning?

3. If Stalin were preparing to launch a preemptive strike against Germany, then his preparation and the deployment of strategic reserves to the Western theater of operations would have started much earlier.

4. Rezun's argument that Hitler struck in connection with the strengthening of the grouping of Soviet troops on the German border,

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does not correspond to the truth. Hitler set the date for the attack on the USSR on April 30, even before the advance of Soviet troops from the depths of the country began.

5. The Germans were transporting fully deployed troops. Soviet troops were transferred in an unmobilized state (which Rezun himself is forced to admit), only a few replenished with personnel called up under the guise of training camps.

6. Stalin believed that beforehand Germany would put forward some kind of demands to the USSR of an ultimatum nature, accompanied by a demonstration of military power. Given the possible conflict of interest, Stalin might need reserve armies as an additional trump card in the big game he was about to play with Hitler.

7. The advancement of reserve armies to create a second strategic echelon, intended to make up for the losses of the active army (the first strategic echelon) in the event of the outbreak of hostilities and the buildup of its efforts, was envisaged by military doctrine, and not by the desire to deliver a preemptive strike against Germany. In against-

otherwise, its creation in the USSR would have started much earlier.

8. In the event of the outbreak of war, the troops of the second strategic echelon, if the situation developed successfully, when the first blow of the aggressor could be repelled, could be used in the transition to the counteroffensive. In an unfavorable scenario for the development of hostilities, they would be used to strengthen the defense on the revealed directions of an enemy breakthrough. In fact, they received such a task - to prepare defenses in the rear of the Western Front.

This could have stopped. But it turns out that Rezun, in addition to the MAIN, also has the "Central" question of my book: IF THE RED ARMY COULD NOT RETURN BACK, BUT IT COULD NOT STAY LONG IN THE BORDER AREAS, THEN WHAT WERE THERE TO DO. And further: "Stalin could not leave his armies to spend the winter in the border forests" [817]. And so he allegedly had no choice but to throw his troops against Germany.

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What kind of Red Army is Rezun so worried about? We are talking about the advancement of several dozen divisions, which did not go to the border areas at all and most of which by June 22 did not budge. The regrouping and transport of formations could be suspended at any time. If the conflict of interests between the two opposing powers had not escalated into war, the few divisions that managed to transfer to the western part of the country, for the most part, would have returned back. At the same time, no economic catastrophe predicted by Rezun would have occurred. And those divisions that remained in the new areas would certainly not have had to spend the winter in tents. We don't know what is worse - to live on four-story bunks in the casemates of the Brest Fortress or in well-equipped semi-dugouts, which our troops were able to build in the shortest possible time. By the way, the headquarters of the western border military districts were warned that the directorates of rifle corps, corps units and divisions, which should be placed in camps on their territory, were arriving with H3 property, training and camp property.

Here we tried to compare Rezun's nonsense about the second strategic echelon of the Red Army with the facts. To deny that the Red Army was aiming for active action in a possible war is, to say the least, foolish. Undoubtedly, Stalin would have used the opportunity to defeat the enemy, the fight with which was inevitable. But the proposal for a preemptive strike was hopelessly late at the time of its development, since Germany had already pre-empted the Soviet Union in the deployment and concentration of its troops. There was practically no time left to prepare a strategic operation on several fronts.

By the middle of June 1941, the German invading army was opposed by the troops of five border military districts, which included 172.5 equivalent divisions (only 54% of all formations of the Red Army)¹. They were dispersed over a vast territory, in a band about 3500 km wide. Directly on the western border

¹ On June 22, the troops of the Odessa District were consolidated into the 9th Separate Army (three days later, the Southern Front will be deployed in this direction on the basis of the Moscow District Administration).

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the enemy was opposed only by 55 divisions and two brigades of the first echelon, as well as about 56 thousand border guards (33 border detachments, four reserve border regiments and two reserve border battalions) and 19.5 thousand people in the operational troops of the NKVD (three divisions, one regiment and one battalion) [818]. The troops of the second echelon of the districts were separated from the border by 20-100 km and further, and the formations of the reserve - by 150-400 km.

To engage in a fight against the mobilized and deployed German army, when the Red Army and especially its main striking force - tank troops - were still in the process of reorganization and re-equipment, that is, in a state of semi-readiness at best, had neither reason nor sense. . The then Soviet political and military leaders can be accused of many sins, but they were by no means distinguished by adventurism and in the current situation they tried to act for sure. By the way, the beginning of the formation in the USSR in 1941 of more than two dozen new mechanized corps is more than convincing evidence that the Soviet Union did not intend to attack Germany at the same time and thereby enter the Second World War.

As an alternative, it was possible to start organizing strategic defense in depth, for example, along the line of fortified areas on the old border. But such an option, apparently, was not even considered. It remained to drag out time by any means and as long as possible in the hope that Hitler would not decide on a war on two fronts and an invasion on the eve of winter. To our great regret, the Red Army turned out to be unprepared either for an offensive or for repulsing a sudden attack by large enemy forces. This was shown by the widely known events that unfolded on the western borders of our country after June 22, 1941.

In this connection, a few words about the fate of the armies being advanced to the west. The command of strategic reserves was created already after the start of the war, on June 25, by the directive of the Headquarters of the Civil Code "On the formation and tasks of the army group of the reserve of the High Command." This group under the command of Marshal S.M. Budyonny originally included four

armies: 19th, 20th, 21st and 22nd, in which there were a total

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complexity of 43 divisions. By July 10, they were supposed to complete their concentration on the Sushchevo-Nevel-Vitebsk-Mogilev-Zhlobin-Omel-Chernigov-r. Desna - r. Dnieper to Kremenchug. This frontier was largely based on water barriers. It is terrible to think how events could have developed after the defeat of the main forces of the Western Front, if the Soviet command had not begun to advance reserve armies to the west in good time! By the way, even the Germans in their strategic deployment directive of 01/31/41 provided that "<...> in case of unfavorable development of operations <...> the Russians will try to stop the German offensive on the line of the rivers Dnieper Western Dvina" [819].

The task of this group was to prepare the defense while maintaining readiness to go on the offensive at the direction of the High Command. Very soon, the Headquarters realized that the huge width of the designated front and the uncertainty of the assigned tasks reduced the effectiveness of the use of reserve armies. Therefore, two days later, on July 27, the group was reorganized: the 19th Army was withdrawn from it and the composition of other formations was changed, after which 28 divisions remained there. They were given a clearer task: "By the end of June 28, 1941, occupy and firmly defend the line of Kreslavl, Desna, Polotsk UR, Vitebsk, Orsha, r. Dnieper to Loev. To prevent the enemy from breaking through in the direction of Moscow <...>" [820].

The reader from all of the above can draw a CONCLUSION: WHO actually prepared the attack, who and why unleashed a war between Germany and the Soviet Union. As for Rezun, we can only give him advice: it's time to start writing a new book, "I take my words back-2." Still, we must apologize to our readers, whom he has been fooling for many years. However, in our opinion, there is some plus in Rezun's writings: he stirred up the stagnant swamp of Soviet historiography of the Great Patriotic War, forced historians and scientists to intensify work on the study of the issues he raised. As a result of their research, they managed to abandon the most mossy myths created by Soviet agitprop.

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Chapter 9

COULD THE DEFEAT BE AVOIDED?

Many researchers and historians believe that the main reason for the defeat of the Red Army in June-July 1941 is that it was not put on full combat readiness and therefore could not enter the war in an organized manner and repel a sudden attack by the enemy. And that the beginning of the war could have turned out quite differently if the troops of the border districts had been brought to full combat readiness in advance. Our point of view is that the Red Army was not ready for the war that was imposed on the Soviet Union by Hitler and his generals. The dispute is on the question - the defeat of the Red Army in the initial period of the war - an accident or a pattern? Now, having a more complete picture of the preparation, real combat and mobilization readiness of the Soviet troops on the eve of the war, we can finally try to answer what were the main reasons for our defeats in the border and subsequent battles in the summer of 1941.

First, about surprise. By the way, here is the time to note that surprise and suddenness in ordinary Russian are synonyms. But from a military point of view, surprise means something more complex than simple surprise. There is no doubt that the German invasion of our territory was unexpected for our troops. But why and to what extent was it sudden? Much depends on the scale and consequences of a surprise attack. After all, here we are not talking about the actions of an individual criminal or an organized gang, but about an attack by a huge, well-trained and well-trained army of the country, whose rulers trampled on the treaties "On non-aggression" and "On border and friendship" with our country.

Strategically, the war was not unexpected for our military and political leadership. To her

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prepared seriously. Much has been written about this. But the measures taken by the leadership to strengthen the country's defense capability and to increase the combat readiness of the Red Army proved to be insufficient and, moreover, belated. On this occasion, the well-known German military historian and participant in the war, K. Toppelskirch, noted that "the Soviet Union prepared for an armed conflict, as far as it was in its power. The German command could not count on strategic surprise. The most that could be achieved was to keep the timing of the offensive secret, so that tactical surprise would facilitate the invasion of enemy territory" [821]. The enemy managed to achieve complete tactical surprise, thus frustrating the implementation of our plans to cover the border. Having seized the initiative, the Germans on the very first day achieved maximum results with minimal effort, money and time. Halder wrote in his diary on the first day of the war:

"Tactical surprise led to the fact that the resistance of the enemy in the border zone turned out to be weak and

disorganized <...>". And further: "<...> the Russian command, due to its sluggishness, will not be able to organize operational opposition to the German offensive in the near future at all. The Russians are forced to accept the battle in the grouping in which they were at the beginning of our offensive" [822]. But that's not all.

The Germans, having started the invasion immediately with large forces, achieved operational surprise. Using the overwhelming superiority in forces and means created by him in the chosen directions of strikes and the air supremacy he had seized, the enemy ensured a high rate of attack and in the first two days advanced 100-150 km on the main western strategic direction, creating conditions for encirclement. and the defeat of the main forces of the Western Front. His offensive proceeded so rapidly that on all three main strategic directions of hostilities in the first week he managed to advance 200 km or more into the interior of the country.

Here is G.K. Zhukov admitted that the main surprise for our command was not the very fact of the attack, but the strength of the invading army and the power of the blow it delivered. And although here

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one can see the desire of the then Chief of the General Staff to relieve himself of responsibility for the fact that the invasion turned out to be sudden for the troops stationed near the border, on the whole, of course, he is right. But WHY was [general headquarters] not ready for such an outbreak of war? Why were our troops unable to oppose anything to the rapid advance of enemy tank formations into the operational depth of the Soviet defense?

It's not just about suddenness. Military catastrophes, more significant in scale, that befell our army near Kiev, Vyazma and Bryansk and in the summer of 1942, when there was no surprise for a long time, are the best proof of this. A typical example is Operation Typhoon, carried out by the Germans in October 1941. Despite the enormous losses in men and weapons (the mechanized corps had to be disbanded, the staffing of other formations and units had to be drastically reduced), the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command made an unsuccessful attempt to seize the initiative in Smolensk battle. Our troops went over to a tough defense. They knew about the preparation of the Germans for a major offensive in the Moscow direction, they were preparing. But to determine the direction of the main attacks of the enemy and this time could not. There was no talk of any tactical surprise. On the Western Front they even carried out counter-training, but from scratch! [823]. The enemy again managed to achieve operational surprise. Under the blows of his tank wedges, our defense collapsed. The main forces of the Western, Reserve and Bryansk fronts, which covered the Moscow direction, were surrounded near Vyazma and Bryansk. A wide gap was formed in the strategic defense of the Soviet troops.

noah almost 500 km, which was nothing to close. The whole world expected the fall of Moscow. Only by a huge effort of all forces the enemy was stopped, and then thrown back from the capital. The Wehrmacht suffered a major defeat for the first time in its history.

This means that the main reason for our defeat lies not so much in the suddenness of the attack, but in the readiness of the Red Army in 1941. Moreover, in the unpreparedness not only to repel a surprise attack, but in general to the war into which the Soviet Union was drawn. Actually,

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listing the shortcomings and shortcomings inherent in the Red Army in comparison with the Wehrmacht, and were devoted to the previous chapters. Now it remains to figure out why they appeared and why they were not eliminated by the beginning of the war. Here reference to one or two reasons is indispensable. Apparently, this happened due to a combination of a number of interrelated objective and subjective reasons. It is necessary to determine which of them had a decisive influence on the construction and preparation of the armed forces for war, and which acted only indirectly. These reasons can be divided into two groups. |

The first of these includes subjective mistakes and miscalculations by the leadership related to the development of the armed forces and their preparation for war. This refers to the mistakes of the political leadership of the country, which first gave Germany the opportunity to defeat its enemies one by one, and then for various reasons ruled out the possibility of a German attack on the USSR in the summer of 1941. They, in turn, led to mistakes and miscalculations by the military leadership. The leadership of the People's Commissariat of Defense and the General Staff, due to lack of data and inability to distinguish the real from disinformation, proceeded not from a real assessment of the strength of a potential enemy, his intentions and capabilities, but from his own ideas about him.

But is it possible, in search of the causes of our failures and defeats, to reduce everything only to the subjective mistakes of the political and military leadership and to the problems of the armed forces? In our opinion, the causes of failures and defeats lie much deeper. They can form the second group of causes, which did not depend on the momentary decisions of the political and military leadership, but stemmed from objective conditions. They were caused by the diseases of the rapid quantitative growth of our armed forces and the state of the country's economy, the insufficient capabilities of which limited the implementation of military programs in full. This predetermined not only the level of combat and mobilization readiness of our armed forces for a modern war, but also undoubtedly affected the level and lifestyle of the country's population, their general and technical literacy, and, finally, their readiness to defend their homeland.

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Much has been said above. Now we will try to analyze in more detail the degree of influence of various causes on the results of military operations in the initial period of the war that were so tragic for our people.

Perhaps it is worth starting with the authoritarian structure of the state, otherwise it is impossible to understand what goals and motives our political leadership was guided by when making certain decisions. I.V. By the end of the 1920s, Stalin, with his own hands, created such a system of power in which all the most important decisions were made only by him and he alone. Despite the attempts of full-time propagandists to give the command-administrative system an external veneer of democracy, it remained essentially authoritarian. As head of the Bolshevik Party, Stalin virtually single-handedly made all the most important decisions on issues of the country's foreign, domestic, economic, and cultural policy. Then these decisions were formalized as decisions of the relevant bodies of the party or the administrative system provided for by the country's constitution.

Enormous power, unlimited by anyone and nothing, placed an enormous burden of responsibility on Stalin's shoulders, because the life and fate of many, many millions of people depended on the decisions he made. This was especially true of the problems of war and peace. At the same time, the absence of constructive criticism and the constant immoderate glorification of him by the people around Stalin could not but create in him excessive confidence in his own infallibility and infallibility. Too much rested on the personality of Stalin - the leader, the "Master". It is impossible to understand the reasons for the appearance of many shortcomings inherent in our army without revealing all the flaws of the Stalinist leadership system.

After the outbreak of World War II, events at first developed in full accordance with Stalin's expectations. Germany successfully defeated Poland and turned its forces back to the West. In 1939-1940. The USSR, without making any special efforts, annexed territories with a total area of 426,700 square kilometers [824]. At that time, 22.6 million people lived there [825]. Only with Finland there was a hitch: peace was concluded in many respects

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the fact that the prolongation of hostilities in Finland threatened to draw the Soviet Union into a war with England and France on the side of Germany, and this could not be allowed to happen. The authority of Stalin, as a successful head of state and strategist, grew immeasurably.

During the months-long confrontation between the Wehrmacht and

French army, reinforced by the British Expeditionary Force, the USSR remained outside the main conflict and accumulated forces, preparing to enter the arena as the main player at an opportune moment. In such a situation, Stalin counted on throwing into the scales the same decisive weight that was supposed to decide the outcome of the war. Under such a scenario, a huge, well-armed and fresh Red Army would have a real chance of success. Especially considering that by the time of her intervention, her opponents had to significantly weaken each other as a result of a long mortal struggle. And then it remained to dictate the terms of peace and reap the sweet fruits of victory.

Meanwhile, the "strange war" on the Western Front, after an 8-month pause, unexpectedly ended with a stunning victory for the Germans in just six weeks of active hostilities. It was then that it became clear that Stalin had miscalculated when he hoped to lure Hitler into the trap of a long war of attrition. The situation in Europe has changed radically. The USSR suddenly found itself face to face with victorious Germany, which no longer loomed behind, as it had before, the French army. On the contrary, the considerable resources of France and other European countries occupied by the Wehrmacht, which had previously worked against the Germans, were now in the hands of the Germans. It turned out that under the new conditions, one had to think not at all about entering the war at a convenient time and on favorable terms in order to decide its outcome in one's favor. It was already about saving their country from the mortal danger that came from the formidable Wehrmacht, crowned with a halo of invincibility.

It is curious how Stalin himself at that time explained one of the main reasons for the impressive successes of the Germans. In his famous speech at the graduation ceremony for students of the Red Army academies in the Kremlin on May 5, 1941, he stated:

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"In order to prepare well for war, it is not only necessary to have a modern army, but it is necessary to prepare the war politically.

What does it mean to prepare for war politically? To prepare for war politically means to have a sufficient number of reliable allies and neutral countries. Germany, starting this war, coped with this task, but England and France did not cope with this task" [826].

Characteristically, he said this just at the moment when, as a result of his brute forceful actions, instead of potentially neutral countries, allies of Nazi Germany appeared on the borders of the USSR, hoping to restore the status quo with its help. The country, thanks to his short-sighted foreign policy, found itself in almost complete international isolation. And his main political and economic partner was the same Ger-

mania, the leader of which by that time had already established the final date for the attack on him. And before the onset of this period, there was only a month and a half left. Stalin's actions on the eve of the Second World War and at its first stage fell perfectly under the apt definition of Engels:

"This is the forgetting of great, fundamental considerations because of the momentary interests of the day, this pursuit of momentary successes and the struggle for them without regard for further consequences, this is the sacrifice of the future movement in sacrifice to the present ..." [827]. The leaders of the USSR did not trust anyone, rejected any compromises (and if they did, then with dubious goals) and did not try diplomatically to find allies for themselves in a future war, or at least to ensure neutrality from their closest neighbors. They were seriously preparing to fight the whole world. Soviet theoreticians timely determined that the war, which the imperialist powers could impose on the USSR, would be a coalition war, a long one, and would require the maximum exertion of all the forces of the country, a combination of various methods of warfare, and the use of new means of armed struggle. But the real military threats to the country and its probable adversaries were correctly identified only in the early autumn of 1940, a year after the outbreak of World War II.

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The military construction of the Armed Forces of the USSR was carried out in accordance with the military doctrine, the content of which was determined by the political leadership of the country. Unfortunately, as Stalin's personality cult intensified, the discussion of projects and proposals for their further construction assumed a formal, bureaucratic character. In fact, everything was decided by the will of one person, under whose opinion all the others adjusted themselves and whom not everyone could dare to criticize. This fettered the creative thought of our prominent theoreticians, and practice often lagged behind theory. Thus, in the training of troops, staffs and commands at all levels, the main attention was paid to the organization and conduct of offensive operations. Defense, as a method of conducting combat operations, was recognized in words, but it was allowed to be conducted only on an operational-tactical scale. The theory of conducting defensive operations on an operational-strategic scale has received unduly little attention. The governing bodies and the troops were not prepared to solve defensive tasks in a war against a strong enemy. A.A. Svechin was the last one who dared to declare: "<...> whoever does not know how to defend himself will not be able to attack; one must be able, with the help of a solid defense, to create the preconditions for an offensive <...>" [828]. The works of Svechin did not find a response, and he himself was shot. This way of solving theoretical disputes was not uncommon at that time.

In the pre-war years, at party congresses and meetings on the occasion of various anniversaries, the military might of the country was praised in every possible way. Accession without much effort of new ter-

rhetoric with a large population gave rise to euphoria from success. From the high stands they announced their readiness to respond to the enemy's strike with a triple blow, they boasted about the increased weight of the artillery salvo of the rifle division, but little thought was given to how to create the conditions for this salvo to accurately hit the target. In the garrisons, the Red Army sang the song "From the taiga to the British seas, the Red Army is the strongest of all ...". And the commander of the 2nd rank G.M. Stern declared at the 18th Party Congress in March 1939 that our people "will be able, if they have to give their lives, to do it in such a way as to get ten lives of enemies earlier for one life of our precious man." Voroshilov from the presidium retorted: "Ten

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few. We need twenty." To the applause of the entire hall, Stern agreed, asking that this be included in the transcript of the congress [829]. In fact, the degree of preparation of the army and the country for war was far from such boastful statements. This became clear during the armed conflicts in 1939-1940. and especially after the war with Finland.

Measures were taken to eliminate the identified numerous shortcomings, including the rearmament of the army and the improvement of the organizational structure of the troops. But the equipping of the Red Army with new types of weapons and military equipment was largely hampered by the insufficient development of the country's industrial base. Despite the colossal efforts invested in the first five-year plans, the country's economy remained archaic, full of disproportions and largely inefficient. Of course, the vast size of the country's territory and the underdevelopment of its infrastructure, which held back the development of industry, had an effect. Labor productivity continued to be low compared to the developed countries of Europe. Despite successes in eradicating illiteracy, the general level of education of the country's population remained low, which led to the low technical culture of the bulk of workers and employees, and hence the army personnel. The country in industrial development and the technological level of production still lagged behind Germany, whose military-industrial base was much more powerful than the Soviet one.

Already according to the plans of the first five-year plan, when creating the industrial base of the country, first of all, they built factories capable of producing military products. But even the existing opportunities of the economy were not always used purposefully and with a sufficient degree of efficiency. For example, on the development of the navy in the USSR in 1934-1937. more than 30% of all appropriations for military equipment were intended. Although it was clear that it would hardly be possible in the coming years to create a fleet capable of confronting potential adversaries on the seas on an equal footing. Enormous human, financial and material resources were expended on the construction of expensive battleships and heavy cruisers before the war. However, arrange them like this

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and failed, so these funds, in essence, were thrown to the wind.

The principle of forming priorities in the preparation of industrial orders was not always observed, shyness and unnecessary duplication were allowed. The military industry of the country was often overloaded with things that were not what the troops needed in the first place. The main attention was paid to the production of the maximum number of basic types of military equipment, to the detriment of auxiliary equipment (including equipping the troops with means of communication, mechanized traction and vehicle transport), without which it was impossible to achieve their effective use on the battlefield. As a result of the resulting significant shortage of weapons, military equipment and equipment, a large number of limited combat-ready, even non-combat-ready units and formations already in peacetime appeared in the troops. Numerous examples of this have been given in previous chapters.

Suffice it to say that by the beginning of the war, the defense industry, transport, aviation, automobile and other enterprises did not even have a mobilization plan for 1941 approved by the government. This means that the needs of the mobilization deployment of the armed forces and the need for equipping with weapons were not properly taken into account. , combat and auxiliary military equipment of newly formed formations and units. The plan to transfer industry to a war footing was adopted only in June 1941, just before the war. Because of this, production capabilities were not timely switched to increasing the production of weapons, and especially ammunition. Excessive centralization of the management of everything and everyone, the lack of initiative hindered work to strengthen the country's defense capability. Decisions on the most important issues of transferring industry to a military footing were repeatedly postponed, the deadlines for adopting new types of weapons into service were disrupted, and their quality often remained unacceptably low. Many proposals of the People's Commissariat of Defense and the State Planning Commission were not considered for a long time.

The pernicious influence of Stalin's personality cult was especially manifested in the implementation of personnel policy in the course of military construction and preparation of the army for war. Stre

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Trying to strengthen personal power in the country, the leader paid special attention to the army. Stalin, who proclaimed the slogan "Cadres decide everything", in words more than once emphasized the need to take care of them. In particular, in public speeches, he hypocritically declared: "In order to manage all this new equipment - the new army needs command cadres who, in

perfect knowledge of modern military art. But it was Stalin who unleashed real terror, directed mainly against those who had not only experience, but also the courage to defend their point of view, who did not engage in sycophancy in front of big and small leaders.

The brutal repressions that continued right up to the very beginning of the war (suffice it to recall the cases of the "aviators" and "Spaniards") tore out the most experienced and capable commanders from the armies. Immediately before the war, almost the entire leadership of the People's Commissariat of Defense, the General Staff, the main and central directorates, the command of the troops of military districts and fleets was replaced. They were replaced by young, energetic, but, as a rule, insufficiently experienced officers and generals who did not have the necessary knowledge and skills to work in responsible positions. Meanwhile, the higher the level at which wrong decisions are made, the more severe the consequences they lead to. Germany managed to save its officer corps from the period of the First World War, which formed the backbone of its highest command cadres. The commanders of the Red Army opposing them

they fell on all these indicators.

Only narrow-minded or malicious people can assert that the repressions did not affect the combat effectiveness of the Armed Forces of the USSR, but on the contrary, they strengthened them. They usually refer to an insignificant proportion of those who were repressed in relation to the total number of commanders of the army and navy, at the same time casting a shadow on the reputation of the destroyed military leaders. At the same time, they deliberately turn a blind eye to the fact that in the highest echelon of the Armed Forces of the USSR, the overwhelming majority of commanding, commanding and political personnel were subjected to repressions. The moral side of the consequences of terror is also hushed up. Indeed, in quantitative terms, the resulting gap was closed, but the qualitative level of command personnel sharply

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fell. Survivors of the repressions, with rare exceptions, were intimidated. They were afraid to make independent decisions, to take the slightest risk, they suppressed any initiative in themselves, because in case of failure they could be accused of deliberate sabotage. In this environment, careerists and demagogues were able to quickly advance in the service by eliminating their competitors with the help of denunciations. During the two years of the "great terror" at the end of the 30s, the competent authorities received approximately 5 million denunciations [830].

Especially bad was the situation with the leading personnel and their operational training. Its level, like the level of combat training of the troops, was far from meeting the requirements of modern warfare. Formations and units were often commanded by people who did not have sufficient qualifications and, moreover, combat experience. And, unfortunately, there were many such commanders on all levels of the career ladder. They had to master their fighting skills in the course of battles at the cost of

large and sometimes unjustified losses. Soviet propagandists, in order to emphasize the adventurism of Hitler's plans, where necessary and not necessary, quoted his words: "The Russian armed forces are a clay colossus without a head." But, as usual, and for obvious reasons, they quoted only part of the phrase, which completely changed its meaning. Hitler, on the other hand, said the following:

"Although the Russian armed forces are a clay colossus without a head, it is impossible to accurately predict their further development. Since Russia must be defeated in any case, it is better to do it now, when the Russian army is leaderless and ill-prepared, and when the Russians have to overcome great difficulties in the military industry created with outside help "(emphasis added. - Auth.) [83].

It was not possible to eliminate the consequences of repression by the beginning of the war. In 1967, in a conversation with the writer K. Simonov, Marshal A.M. Vasilevsky said this about it:

"You say that without the thirty-seventh year there would have been no defeats for the forty-first, but I will say more. Without the thirty-seventh year, perhaps there would have been no war at all in the forty-first year. In the fact that Hitler decided to start a war in the forty-first year, an assessment of that degree

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nor the defeat of the military personnel, which we had. What can I say, when in the thirty-ninth year I had to be on the commission during the transfer of the Leningrad military district from Khozin to Meretskov, there were a number of divisions commanded by captains, because everyone who was higher was arrested without exception" [832].

The main criterion for appointment to the highest positions was personal devotion to the leader and readiness to persistently and firmly implement his decisions. In this regard, the appointment of G.K. Zhukov to the most responsible post of Chief of the General Staff. And this despite his complete lack of appropriate education, experience in staff work, and even open hostility towards it. Apparently, Stalin believed that Zhukov would restore order there with a firm hand, achieve the elimination of numerous shortcomings revealed in the work of the military department when Voroshilov was removed from the post of people's commissar of defense. However, history shows that not every good and strong-willed military leader can head the general staff - THIS "brain of the army", in the figurative expression of the smartest B.M. Shaposhnikov, just like an experienced staff officer may not become a good commander.

The General Staff is the main governing body of the country's armed forces in peacetime and wartime. Only with the well-organized work of a team of highly professional specialists could the General Staff carry out

complex tasks of strategic and operational planning of the use of armed forces in war and operations, preparation of theaters of military operations, improvement of the organizational structure of troops, finding the right solutions on issues of mobilization readiness, logistics of troops, etc. Their fulfillment must be closely linked with the work of the national economy, transport and communications, and the fulfillment by industry of orders for armaments and combat equipment. All this presupposes that the leader of such an important governing body, first of all, has a broad outlook, academic education, deep theoretical knowledge and high culture, knowledge of the features and capabilities of the types and branches of the troops, the military industry serving

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the needs of the armed forces. The chief must have the ability to listen to the considerations of the closest assistants, to make the most efficient use of their knowledge and skills. Such qualities were very lacking in G.K. Zhukov.

According to K.K. Rokossovsky.

"<...> Zhukov was a trained and very demanding commander. But this exactingness often grew into unreasonable severity and even rudeness. Such actions caused discontent among many of his subordinates. Complaints came to the division, and to the command. come and deal with them. Attempts to influence who the brig had no success. And we were forced <...> in order to improve the situation in the brigade, "push forward" G.K. Zhukov to the highest position in the inspection of the cavalry" [833].

Pumping and rudeness made it difficult to achieve coherence in the work of the staff team of well-educated professionals. It is difficult for us to judge what Zhukov did and did not do over the past five decisive months in this important post. The sphere of activity of the General Staff is too closed, the funds of which are still in special custody at TsAMO. At least, we never saw the work promised by the Academy of Military Sciences on Zhukov's creative contribution to military science. If during the described period he had done something similar, then the people who created the cult of the First Marshal of Victory would not have missed the opportunity to describe his merits. In any case, Zhukov's activities as Chief of the General Staff can hardly be called successful. It is not by chance that S.M. Shtemenko, who joined the staff of the General Staff in the autumn of 1940 and described in detail its work on the eve and during the war, did not say a word about Zhukov's work before the German attack.

Zhukov later admitted:

"It must be frankly said that neither the People's Commissar nor I had the necessary experience in preparing the armed forces for such a war that unfolded in 1941, but, as

Obviously, experienced military personnel were exterminated in 1937-1939. [834].

Leapfrog with the change of leaders in the People's Commissariat of Defense and the General Staff did not contribute to the qualitative development of plans that are most consistent with the emerging

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environment. At least two gross mistakes were made in pre-war operational and strategic planning. Firstly, our military leaders, unable to understand the essence of the German Blitzkrieg strategy, misjudged the possible nature of military operations in the initial period of the war. The plans drawn up in the event of war were based on outdated views: it was believed that decisive military action would be launched only after the completion of the concentration and deployment of the main forces of the parties. In any case, it was supposed to repel the first blow of the enemy and create conditions for going over to the offensive with decisive goals. The well-known maxim was confirmed: "Generals are always preparing for the last war." And those who at one time studied at the academy of the German General Staff and better understood the essence of the blitzkrieg concept were basically destroyed.

Already in the very operational formation of the troops of the border districts, which was mainly formed in the course of the Polish campaign, the prerequisites for defeat in the initial period of the war were laid. And this time, as in many other cases, political considerations prevailed over operational-strategic ones. From the very beginning, it was decided to hold the newly annexed territories as a springboard in case of war. The formations of the covering armies, stretched to a point along the state border, in combination with field fortifications and fortified areas under construction, created only the illusion of its reliable defense. The troops of the first echelon near the border districts in such a formation could not repel the blow of large Wehrmacht forces and thereby ensure the mobilization and deployment of the main forces of the Red Army. It was not possible to count on timely support by the forces of the second echelons and reserves of the districts due to their low mobility. The calculation was based on the fact that reconnaissance would be able to timely reveal the concentration of enemy strike groupings, after which mobilization and deployment could be carried out in a timely manner, before the main enemy ones were brought into battle. forces. This calculation was not justified. Miscalculations were also made in basing the Air Force and material reserves, which were concentrated dangerously close to the state border.

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In addition, when evaluating the enemy, they failed to reveal his plan, in particular, to correctly determine the direction of his main attack. The fatal decision to concentrate the main

efforts in the southwestern strategic direction, adopted in accordance with the desire of the leader and contrary to the opinion of more experienced military leaders, led to the weakening of our forces in the western direction, where the enemy delivered the main blow. This brought the Red Army to the brink of defeat. Already in the course of hostilities, it was necessary to carry out large-scale regroupings of Soviet troops, waste time and bring them into battle in parts almost from wheels.

Zhukov, who at one time signed the decision to arrest the commander of the Western Front together with the Chief Prosecutor, retroactively spoke to him as follows: "<...> having no idea about the enemy groups that had broken through, front commander D.G. Pavlov often made decisions that did not correspond to the situation" [835]. This reproach with good reason can be forwarded to the High Command. Without justifying Pavlov in the least, we note that he made decisions in accordance with Directives No. 2 and 3, which were completely inconsistent with the current situation. And next to Pavlov, almost from the very beginning of hostilities, there were two marshals - Shaposhnikov and Kulik, who were soon joined by another one - Voroshilov.

You can often hear that as a result of the treaty with Germany, the USSR won almost two years of peace, which gave it the opportunity to significantly strengthen its defense capability. So it was, although one can argue for a long time how effectively this time was used. Indeed, in the last months of peace, the main efforts were aimed at eliminating the identified shortcomings. The combat strength of the Red Army was increased, the organizational structure of the troops, their armament and technical equipment were improved. But far from everything was done to use this gain in time. One thing is indisputable: at the same time, Germany was strengthening at a much faster pace and was able to radically change the balance of power between itself and its opponents.

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As a result of ongoing continuous changes in deployment schemes and various kinds of inconsistencies between the General Staff, People's Commissariats of Industry, the People's Commissariat of Railways and local mob workers, the development of the mobilization plan MP-4] 1 by June 1941 was still not completed. In practice, the development of operational and mobilization plans in the armies and formations was also not completed, and they were not mastered by the troops. Apparently, this gave Zhukov reason to assert that the country entered the war without operational and mobilization plans completed and approved by the government.

The most serious mistake was the disbanding of tank corps after the Polish campaign. She was corrected, but too late. Problems with the completion of tank

units and formations of hastily formed mechanized corps with personnel, especially command, combat and auxiliary equipment, transport and communications, the issues of supplying them with fuel and ammunition by the beginning of the war had not been resolved. The tank units did not have enough barracks, parks, training grounds, tankodromes, training classes, teaching aids to improve the training of personnel. Things got to the point that almost at the last moment it was necessary to equip tank regiments that did not have tanks with 76-mm and 45-mm guns and machine guns in order to use them as anti-tank regiments and divisions. Many mechanized corps, formed only formally, quickly melted away in the fire of border battles, failing to inflict tangible damage to the Wehrmacht.

A lot has been said about the tense situation with the manning of all branches and types of troops with traction means and vehicles, especially special ones. They expected to make up for the shortfall through mobilization, but the time for receiving equipment from the national economy and delivering it to the troops significantly exceeded the established terms for the readiness of the units. The superiority of the Wehrmacht over the Red Army in mobility was combined with its undoubted superiority in tactical and operational art at all levels of command, as well as with an advantage in the organization, training and combat experience of the troops. All this allowed the Wehrmacht to achieve great success in the border battle, and in the future, when

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Yes, the newly mobilized reserves of the Red Army entered the battle.

In aviation, according to a note by Timoshenko and Zhukov to Stalin dated May 15, 115 air regiments were in the formation stage, that is, 34.5% of the total number of air units were not combat-ready. It was possible to count on bringing them to full readiness only by 01/01/42. In addition to the above problems, there were others: firstly, the subordination of air formations and units to combined arms armies, whose commanders were completely unprepared for their competent use, secondly secondly, such subordination ruled out rapid maneuver and massing of aviation in the most important directions. After all, Soviet aviation was not defeated on 06/22/41. The losses we suffered on the first day of the war were, of course, painful, but by no means provided the Germans with numerical superiority. They knocked out our aviation during the first weeks of the war, and the main role here was played, first of all, by the low level of flight and tactical skills of the crews of the western border districts, the lack of proper management and material support.

Thus, in terms of its level of preparation for military operations, Krasnaya A was inferior to the Wehrmacht in many qualitative parameters. To eliminate major shortcomings in the training and equipment of troops and to carry out

manpower reorganization of the armed forces and their re-equipment with new equipment required a lot of time. Therefore, Stalin, soberly assessing the real state of the Red Army, did everything possible to delay the outbreak of war with Germany. He was most afraid of provoking Hitler to attack before the Red Army was ready to fight on equal terms with the Wehrmacht.

On May 4, the Politburo of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of the Soviet Union (6) adopted the most important Decree "On strengthening the work of the Soviet central and local bodies", which was then formalized as a decision of the Plenum of the Central Committee. According to him, I.V. Stalin was approved as Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR instead of V.M. Molotov, who became the first deputy chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, while remaining in the post of people's commissar for foreign affairs. Thus, the combination was formally legalized

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Stalin of the highest party and state posts. In the situation that had taken shape by the summer of 1941, this was a step in the right direction. But in the conditions of immoderate praise from the inner circle, the leader believed in his own genius and infallibility, and this time outwitted himself.

The most objective indicator of the growing threat of attack was the concentration of German troops near the Soviet borders. But Stalin erroneously believed that Hitler would never decide on a major war in the East without first putting an end to England. It was possible to defeat this country not only by a direct landing on its territory, the probability of success of which after the loss of the air "Battle of Britain" by Germany was vanishingly small. The vast British Empire had its Achilles' heel - the Near and Middle East. In the last pre-war year of 1938, the British imported into their country 11.85 million tons of oil and oil products [836], and a large proportion of this vast flow came from there, mainly from Iran. The loss of Iranian sources of oil greatly undermined Britain's ability to continue the war. At the same time, if they were captured, Germany would completely solve its own chronic fuel problems. In addition to Iran, industrial oil production was then carried out in Saudi Arabia and Iraq, and a large oil field had already been discovered in Kuwait. In a word, the region of the Near and Middle East seemed to be an extremely tempting target for further German expansion.

Therefore, the episode described by Zhukov is quite understandable. When once again Zhukov tried, in his words, to get permission to put the troops of the western military districts on alert, Stalin led him to the map and, pointing to the Middle East, said: "This is where they [the Germans] will go" [837]. Stalin reasoned quite rationally, but Hitler had his own logic. He believed that it would not be difficult for him to quickly defeat the Russian armed forces.

and to get the oil so badly needed by Germany to wage a long war of attrition with England in the Soviet Union. And not only oil ... And before Iran, Hitler hoped to take through the Caucasus.

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Undoubtedly, many of the strategic mistakes of the Soviet leadership were largely due to a well-organized targeted disinformation campaign by the Germans. It makes sense to dwell on this issue in more detail.

The Germans themselves did not hope that they would be able to hide from the omnipresent eyes of the communist underground the concentration of huge masses of people and military equipment on the territory of the former Poland hostile to them. Therefore, they constantly developed and purposefully carried out new measures to misinform the military and political leaders of the Soviet Union about the true goals of their actions. For this, the press, radio, the transmission of secret and encrypted telegrams with the expectation of their interception by intelligence and counterintelligence of certain countries, and the metered dissemination of false rumors through various channels, including diplomatic ones, were widely used. A number of major measures were envisaged for operational-strategic camouflage and political disinformation, united by a single plan with the leading role of the military command.

As early as February 15, 1941, Keitel issued an order that marked the beginning of the implementation of a set of measures designed to hide the preparations for Operation Barbarossa from the Soviet leadership. There, in particular, it was said:

"<...> In all informational and other activities related to misleading the enemy, be guided by the following instructions:

a) At the first stage:

to reinforce the already and now universally formed impression of the impending invasion of England. Use for this purpose data on new means of attack and vehicles;

exaggerate the significance of the secondary operations of "Marita"¹ and Sonnenblum², the actions of the 10th Aviation Corps, as well as inflate data on the number of forces involved in their implementation;

¹ "Marita" - German plan of operation against Greece. ² "Sonnenblume" - a plan for the transfer of German troops to North Africa.

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the concentration of forces for Operation Barbarossa should be explained as the movement of troops associated with the mutual replacement of the garrisons of the west, center of Germany and the east, as the pulling up of rear echelons for Operation Marita, and, finally, as defensive measures to cover the rear from a possible attack from side of Russia.

6) At the second stage:

spread the opinion about the concentration of troops for the operation "Barbarossa" as the largest diversionary maneuver in the history of troops, which supposedly serves to mask the last preparations for the invasion of England <... > "[838].

In the same order, Keitel emphasized:

"Especially important for disinformation of the enemy would be such information about the airborne corps, which could be interpreted as preparation for actions against England" [839].

All these measures were designed, on the one hand, to hide the massive concentration of forces involved in Operation Barbarossa, and on the other hand, to mislead the enemy by giving him false information about his troops and intentions. This the Germans succeeded in many ways. For example, on May 15, 1941, the Intelligence Directorate of the Red Army reported that the Luftwaffe had 8-10 airborne divisions, of which 1-2 were in Greece, 5-6 were on the northern coast of France and Belgium, and two more were in [Germany [840]. Thus, the Soviet leadership was given the wrong impression that the Germans were clearly aiming their strike formations at England...

The day of May 22, 1941, became the starting point for the final stage of the transfer of the Wehrmacht to the Soviet borders, when, along with a sharp increase in the rate of transportation of ground units, the redeployment of aviation began. Exactly one month remained before the date of the German attack. It was a critical moment in the whole operation.

' In fact, the Wehrmacht at that time had only one 7th airborne division, which was in Greece. Another division, the 22nd Infantry, trained in transport and glider landings, was stationed in Holland.

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on the concentration of forces intended for the invasion of the USSR. It became critical because it was from this moment that

The Germans themselves no longer considered it possible to keep the entire operation secret from the enemy [841]. That is why they prepared in advance and began to implement the second phase of the campaign to disinform the Soviet leadership about their true intentions. Its plan was formulated in the instructions of the leadership of the OKW dated May 12, 1941:

"1. The second phase of disinformation of the enemy begins simultaneously with the introduction of the maximum condensed timetable for the movement of echelons on May 22. At this point, the efforts of the highest headquarters and other organs involved in disinformation should be <...> aimed at presenting the concentration of forces for Operation Barbarossa as a widely conceived maneuver in order to mislead the Western adversary <...>.

2. <...> among the formations located in the east, a rumor about a rear cover against Russia and a "distracting concentration of forces in the east" must circulate, and the troops located on the English Channel must believe in real preparations for an invasion of England. .

<...> At the same time, it would be expedient <...> to issue orders to the largest possible number of formations located in the east to be transferred to the west and thereby cause a new wave of rumors.

3. Operation "Mercury"! may, on occasion, be used by the information service to spread the thesis that the action to capture the island of Crete was a dress rehearsal for a landing in England.

4. The Supreme High Command of the Armed Forces <...> will supplement the disinformation measures with the fact that soon a number of ministries will be entrusted with tasks related to demonstrative actions against England <...>.

5. Political measures to deceive the enemy have already been taken and new ones are planned [842].

The "political measures of disinformation of the enemy" mentioned in the last paragraph were yet another carefully planned large-scale campaign to

' "Mercury" is the code name for the operation to capture Crete.

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misleading the top Soviet leadership. It was carried out in full accordance with the favorite principle of the Reich Propaganda Minister Goebbels: "A lie must be monstrous to be believed." The aim of the Germans was twofold. First, they tried to divert the attention of the Soviet elite from the real development of events and confuse it as much as possible. And secondly, they wanted

artificially create an information field of interference in which really important signals about their true intentions would be lost.

At the very beginning of May, rumors were spread through diplomatic circles that Germany had begun to exert serious pressure on the USSR in order to force it to yield to its demands and agree to certain agreements. The essence of these mythical agreements can be learned from the information presented to Ribbentrop on May 28, 1941] on the basis of intelligence reports. It summarizes the very rumors, the source of which were the Germans themselves and which then returned to them back:

"1) the German Wehrmacht is granted the right of passage through Soviet territory;

2) the wheat fields of the Ukraine for a long time surrender to the Warend Reich;

3) Soviet Russia declares its readiness to place at the disposal of the Reich part of the oil fields of Baku.

For this, according to rumors, Russia gets free access to the Persian Gulf and, possibly, to Afghanistan" [843].

If you believe this rumor, then the concentration of huge forces of the Wehrmacht on the Soviet borders was easily explained, firstly, by the Germans' attempt to back up their far beyond common sense demands on the USSR with real threats, and secondly, by the intention to launch a campaign against the Near and Middle East through Soviet territory. The rumors immediately aroused general interest and began to circulate around the world. The Finnish ambassador to Germany, Kiwimäki, reported them to his president, Ryti, on 3 May. Soon the Finnish ambassador in London conveyed similar information to Helsinki. And on June 11 and 12, the envoys of Finland in Budapest and Washington reported the same thing [844]. At the beginning of the last decade of May, one of the Hungarian ministers gossiped

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He said in Berlin that Stalin was allegedly ready to cede to Germany full control over the extraction and transportation of Soviet raw materials and turn his country into an appendage of the German economy [845].

The first echoes of these rumors reached Moscow no later than May 5, when the agent Corsican! transmitted from Berlin:

"The press officer at the Ministry of Economy KROL <...> declared that "Germany will demand from the USSR to act against England on the side of the Axis powers". As a guarantee that the USSR will fight on the side of "all" to the decisive end, Germany will demand from the USSR the occupation by the German army of Ukraine and possibly also the Baltic states.

These measures <...> are necessary for Germany, because in the near future decisive actions of the German army against the Suez Canal will begin, therefore Germany needs calm in the east" [846].

On May 9, a very close confirmation of this information followed, but from another agent, named Sergeant Major:

"<...> First, Germany will present an ultimatum to the Soviet Union demanding greater exports to Germany and the abandonment of communist propaganda. As a guarantee of the fulfillment of these requirements, German commissars must be sent to the industrial and economic centers and enterprises of the Ukraine, and certain Ukrainian regions must be occupied by the German army. The presentation of the ultimatum will be preceded by a "war of nerves" in order to demoralize the Soviet Union" [847].

Such stunning rumors quickly found grateful listeners and disseminators among diplomats, intelligence officers, analysts and media correspondents. They took on a life of their own

' His real name was Arvid Harnack, at that time an assistant to the Reichsministry of the German Economy. He was a member of the Red Chapel intelligence network. Executed 22 December 1942

? Real name - Harro Schulze-Boysen, Oberleutnant, at that time an employee of the Foreign Relations Department of the Luftwaffe Headquarters. He was a member of the Red Chapel intelligence network. Executed 22 December 1942

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continuously multiplied, expanded and expanded. Mussi even gave concrete figures for the mythical agreements. Ultimately, they also reached Moscow through various channels. On June 4, the USSR plenipotentiary in Berlin, Dekanozov, wrote to Molotov: "Rumors about the lease of Ukraine for 5, 35 and 99 years are spread throughout Germany" [848]. Increasingly, it was asserted that secret negotiations between the USSR and Germany regarding German demands were either about to begin, or were already underway, or even ended with the signing of the relevant agreements, which for some reason had not yet been advertised. Goebbels noted with undisguised satisfaction in his diary on May 25, 1941:

"The rumors we are spreading about the invasion of England are working. There is already extreme nervousness in England. As far as Russia is concerned, we have managed to organize an enormous flow of false reports. Newspaper "ducks" do not give abroad the opportunity to figure out what is true and what is false. This is the one

the atmosphere we need" [849].

Soviet intelligence received confirmation of such widespread rumors not only from Berlin. On June 10, the German communist G. Kegel', who worked as deputy head of the economics department at the German embassy in Moscow, reported:

"The days before June 20 or 23 are, according to Shiber?, decisive. Hitler invited Stalin to come to Germany. The answer must be given before June 12, 1941. If Stalin does not come to Berlin, then war is inevitable. Germany made demands on the USSR:

a) additional deliveries of 2.5 million tons of grain.

'
Gerhard Kegel was one of the most valuable intelligence agents management since 1933. From June 1940 to June 1941, G. Kegel transmitted through the Soviet intelligence officer K. Leontiev, who was in touch with him, 20 reports that spoke about the plans of the German leadership to prepare for war against the USSR. On June 15, 1941, he informed K. Leontiev that the embassy was firmly convinced that Germany was "facing an attack on the USSR in the coming days. According to Shiber's adviser, the attack will take place on June 23 or 24. There is an order that heavy artillery be transferred from Krakow to the borders of the USSR by June 19.

? Shiber at that time worked as an adviser to the German embassy in Moscow.

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6) free transit to Persia and military occupation of Soviet grain warehouses for 4-5 million tons.

The deadline for accepting proposals is June 23, 1941." [850].

Another topic of persistent rumors spread in Berlin on the personal instructions of Goebbels was the allegedly expected arrival of Stalin himself in the German capital. To increase the likelihood, even the mass sewing of red flags for his solemn meeting was mentioned. This was yet another allusion to the desire of the Germans to discuss some serious claims against the USSR at the highest level. This opened up vast opportunities for conducting lengthy negotiations, and Stalin undoubtedly prepared very seriously for them. Moreover, the level of these negotiations was expected to be the highest, because, according to rumors, Hitler was going to personally meet with the Soviet leader [851].

The top Soviet leaders were no doubt greatly puzzled when all this information reached their ears. Still, the whole world is animatedly discussing their negotiations

and agreements with Germany, but they have no idea about them! Meanwhile, German officials kept deathly silence on this issue. An attempt to test the waters was the well-known TASS report of June 13, 1941, published in Soviet newspapers the next day:

"Even before the arrival of the British ambassador to the USSR, Mr. Cripps, in London, and especially after his arrival, rumors began to be circulated in the English and foreign press in general about the "imminence of war between the USSR and Germany." According to these rumors: 1) Germany allegedly made claims to the USSR of a territorial and economic nature, and now negotiations are underway between Germany and the USSR on the conclusion of a new, closer agreement between them; 2) the USSR allegedly rejected these claims, in connection with which Germany began to concentrate its troops near the borders of the USSR with the aim of attacking the USSR) 3) the Soviet Union, in turn, began to intensively prepare for a war with Germany and is concentrating troops near the boundaries of the latter. Despite the obvious senselessness of these rumors, responsible circles in Moscow nevertheless considered it necessary, in view of the stubborn Mus

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of these rumors, to authorize TASS to declare that these rumors are clumsily concocted propaganda of forces hostile to the USSR and Germany, interested in further expansion and outbreak of war.

TASS declares that: 1) Germany did not present any claims to the USSR and does not propose any new, closer agreement, which is why negotiations on this subject could not take place; 2) according to the USSR, Germany is just as steadfastly observing the terms of the Soviet-German non-aggression pact as the Soviet Union, which is why, in the opinion of Soviet circles, rumors about Germany's intention to break the pact and launch an attack on the USSR are without any basis, and what is happening in Recently, the transfer of German troops, freed from operations in the Balkans, to the eastern and northeastern regions of Germany is connected, presumably, with other motives that have nothing to do with Soviet-German relations; 3) the USSR, as follows from its peace policy, observed and intends to comply with the terms of the Soviet-German non-aggression pact, which is why the rumors that the USSR is preparing for war with Germany are false and provocative; 4) The summer training camps of the Red Army reserves and the forthcoming maneuvers are aimed at nothing more than training the reserves and checking the operation of the railway apparatus, which, as you know, are carried out every year, in view of which these Red Army measures are portrayed as hostile to Germany at least least ridiculous" [852].

This message was, in essence, nothing more than a desperate attempt to start at least some kind of dialogue with the Germans. In case of success, to receive from them the same assurances of their intention to steadfastly observe the non-aggression pact, at worst, at least to find out Hitler's further plans. But

the Germans did not react in any way to the Soviet sounding, leaving the leadership of the USSR in complete ignorance of what was happening. Only Goebbels noted in his diary on June 15:

"The TASS denial turned out to be stronger than the first reports suggested. Obviously, Stalin wants, with the help of an emphasized friendly tone and assertions that nothing is happening, to remove from himself all possible grounds for accusations of starting a war" [853].

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A massive disinformation attack, launched from all sides and confirmed by many independent sources, could confuse anyone. It hopelessly drowned agent reports, which spoke of the German preparations for the war and the expected dates for its start. In addition, these reports often contradicted each other and were rarely confirmed in practice. Therefore, Stalin took for disinformation and truthful reports from reliable sources.

By the way, Stalin soon received quite plausible confirmation of the correctness of his analysis of the intentions of the Germans. It happened when another meticulously thought-out German disinformation "duck" successfully found its addressee. To give the greatest credibility to its creation and implementation, the Reich Propaganda Minister Goebbels himself took a personal part. In agreement with Hitler, on June 13, his article "Crete as an example" was published in the central Nazi newspaper "Völkischer Beobachter". It was about the fact that the recent airborne assault on Crete was a dress rehearsal for what was being prepared. From day to day the invasion of the British Isles. Shortly after going on sale, the entire surviving print run of the issue was hastily withdrawn and destroyed. Rumors spread everywhere in Berlin about the extreme displeasure that Hitler expressed to his Reich Minister for this article. This created the complete appearance that Goebbels had not carefully blurted out the secret military plans of the Germans. So Stalin was given yet another proof of his own foresight regarding Hitler's further plans.

But it was by no means the last. The Germans continued to confirm the rumors familiar to us to their allies already through official channels. On June 15, the very next day after the publication of the TASS report, Ribbentrop instructed the German ambassador in Hungary:

"I ask you to inform the Hungarian President of the following:

In view of the large concentration of Russian troops on the German eastern border, the Führer will probably be forced, at the latest in early July, to clarify German-Russian relations and, in connection with this, present certain demands.

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niya. Since it is difficult to predict the outcome of these negotiations, the German government believes that Hungary needs to take steps to ensure the security of its borders.

This assignment is strictly confidential. I ask you to point out this fact to the Hungarian President" [854].

Ribbentrop, of course, knew perfectly well that the start of the implementation of the Barbarossa plan was scheduled exactly in a week, but he tried in a roundabout way to send false information to Moscow again in order to impress Stalin that nothing would happen, at least until the beginning of July. And if it does happen, it will not be a war at all, but only negotiations over some obscure German demands. Similar instructions were sent to the German ambassadors in Italy and Japan [855]. The whole calculation was based on the fact that this information would reach Stalin's ears in one way or another. They, of course, reached and fell on fertile ground. Stalin received further confirmation of the correctness of his analysis of [Hitler's] intentions and rashly decided that he still had enough time to properly respond to his further moves. Of course, Stalin was not going to obey all the demands of the Germans. His main goal was to play for time, because in a month or two it would be too late to start a war in 1941]: the autumn thaw and, moreover, the harsh Russian winter is not the best time to fight the USSR

It is not for nothing that we have described in such detail the last pre-war German campaign of political disinformation directed against the Soviet Union. Knowing its essence and timing helps to better understand the motives for many of Stalin's actions in the last pre-war weeks. The leader could not possibly allow Hitler to speak to himself from a position of strength. For the upcoming difficult and important trades with the Germans, he could well use extra trump cards, the role of which was the best fit for the reserve armies of the High Command transferred to the Western theater of operations. If Hitler concentrated his troops near the border, judging by the rumors, for psychological pressure on the USSR, then in order to successfully counteract his brute pressure from the Soviet side, it was necessary to bring forward comparable forces. Their

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it didn't even hurt to demonstrate to the Germans for warning, therefore, they didn't make a special secret from the advancement of troops from the depths of the country to the west. In addition, Stalin, being a very prudent and cautious politician, preferred to play it safe once again. After all, the war, too, could not be completely excluded in the event of a breakdown in hypothetical trading

with Hitler. This means that it did not interfere with placing additional reserves closer to the zone of possible collision. With sufficient forces at his disposal, Stalin could not fear any unpleasant surprises.

Therefore, on the eve of the negotiations he expected with the Germans, he allowed the military to start moving strategic reserves from the depths of the country precisely in May-June 1941. After all, it began about two weeks after the Germans began spreading rumors about the preparation of a number of exorbitant demands on the USSR. But at that time, Stalin did not see any special need to hurry, believing that events would develop according to the usual scenario: first, the Germans would present some claims or demands, then negotiations on their merits. And only in case of their failure - an ultimatum, after which a declaration of war may follow. For such a variant of actions, according to his calculations, it was quite enough time.

At the same time, Stalin quite reasonably assumed that in order to justify his possible aggression, Hitler might try to artificially create some kind, even a far-fetched, pretext for starting a war. That is why the leader did everything in his power to not give Hitler the slightest reason to complain. All economic agreements with Germany were scrupulously carried out to the last point. The troops in the western districts were given orders not to succumb to any provocations under any circumstances. They intended to mobilize and deploy the army only with a clearly expressed threat of attack or even immediately with the outbreak of hostilities, hoping that they would have time to carry them out before the offensive of the main enemy forces began. When there were clear signs of the preparation of a German attack, the measures taken were insufficient and, most importantly, belated. All the more impracticable was the proposal of the General Staff "to forestall

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the enemy in deployment and attack the German army at the moment when it will be in the deployment stage and will not have time to organize the front and the interaction of the military branches. It remained only to hope for the genius of the leader, who would somehow manage to delay the start of the war.

To correctly determine the possible date for the start of German aggression was, frankly, not at all easy. Agent information on this score was the most contradictory. At the same time, they were often mistaken for disinformation inspired by the British, aimed at undermining Soviet-German relations to their advantage. Most of all, Stalin feared the formation of a united front of the leading capitalist states against the USSR. Adding fuel to this fire was the sudden flight to Scotland of the Deputy Fuhrer for the party, Rudolf Hess, on May 10, 1941. It was clear that he intended to negotiate peace with the British. If they were successful, Germany would receive in the West other

ny rear for the war with the USSR, and such a development of events did not suit the Soviet leadership. However, very soon hostilities between the armed forces of England and Germany broke out with renewed vigor. So, in the early hours of May 19, the most powerful ship of the German fleet, the battleship Bismarck, began a raid in the Atlantic, which ended on May 27 with her death, which, however, cost the British dearly. And from May 20 to May 31, a bloody battle broke out for the most important stronghold of England in the Mediterranean - Crete. The Germans managed to capture this island at the cost of heavy losses. These events convincingly testified that the Hess mission had failed, but the confidence in the British in the Soviet Union, nevertheless, did not increase at all.

The Germans postponed the start date of Barbarossa from May 15 to June 22 because of the need to conduct operations in the Balkans, which made the already puzzling situation especially confusing. After that, the sources who reported to Moscow the initially correct, but turned out to be erroneous date, lost much of Stalin's confidence. The success of the German disinformation campaign noted above was largely facilitated by the lack of reliable information from the top Soviet leadership about Hitler's true intentions. As a result of pre-war repressions, the central apparatus

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foreign intelligence and almost all of its main foreign residencies suffered irreparable damage. The ability to collect accurate information in Europe has declined sharply. Military intelligence was also seriously affected by the repressions. Interestingly, if German intelligence invariably underestimated the number of Red Army troops, then Soviet intelligence, on the contrary, constantly exaggerated the strength of the Wehrmacht. It is possible that the military intelligence officers deliberately, out of good intentions, somewhat overestimated the enemy's forces in order to push the leadership to take more decisive measures to strengthen their troops in the West. For example, according to their estimates, | March 1941 in Germany, there were 263 divisions, while in fact there were 184, or 43% less. Even further from reality were estimates of the number of German tanks (11-12 thousand according to intelligence data and 4604 in reality) and aircraft (20700 according to intelligence data and 5259 in reality) [856].

On May 31, 1941, the Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff of the Red Army sent out a special message about the grouping of German troops on June 1, 1941. Stalin, Molotov, Voroshilov, Timoshenko, Beria, Kuznetsov, Zhdanov, Zhukov and Malenkov received it. The disposition of the Wehrmacht forces there was described in some detail, but also did not differ in particular accuracy. The total number of divisions was estimated at 286-296, of which 120-122 were supposed to be on the Soviet border, and 122-126 against England. The remaining 44-48 divisions were classified as reserves [857]. Judging by these figures, the number of German divisions continued to be exaggerated in the same proportion, because in fact they were then much smaller - 208 [858]. But something else was much worse: the distribution of German forces according to this

communication did not in any way allow to estimate whether the Wehrmacht would rush this time, to the west or to the east. Meanwhile, it was these data that formed the basis of intelligence report No. 5 of June 15, 1941, which was printed in a typographical way for familiarization to a wide circle of people [859].

Finally, by June 20, according to intelligence data, the Germans had concentrated 129 Wehrmacht divisions directly at the borders of the USSR. In reality, as it later became known, there were 128 of them [860]. It would seem that Soviet intelligence could only be congratulated on its great success: they accurately determined the composition of the enemy grouping, concentrated near

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vetsky border! However, a significant error in the calculation of the total number of German divisions and their distribution between West and East, this time again did not allow us to draw an unambiguous conclusion about who the Germans considered at that moment their primary goal.

In addition, having correctly determined the number of German formations assembled on the Soviet border on June 20, 1941, Soviet intelligence made a mistake with their distribution according to directions. Quite accurately, only the number of German divisions in the GA "North" band was established - 29, while there were 30 of them. But in the GA "Center" they counted only 30 divisions, but in fact there were 20.5 divisions more. On the other hand, another 20.5 divisions were assigned to the 43.5 divisions located in the south [861]. From this intelligence it followed that almost half of all Wehrmacht forces were deployed in a southerly direction. Thus, the reconnaissance failed to reveal the direction of the main German attack, which they inflicted with the forces of the Center GA.

Serious omissions in the activities of Soviet military intelligence officers include the fact that they failed to reveal the presence of tank groups (armies) in the Wehrmacht, in which the Germans assembled all their mobile formations. Apparently they weren't looking. In Poland they were not at all. In France, one tank group was first created, only then the Germans formed a second one. At one time, Chief of the General Staff Zhukov was not interested in the report of scouts on the experience of using German tank groups, uniting two or even three motorized (tank) corps under a single command, moreover, depending on the situation, they were often reinforced by infantry. But in vain: based on the location and subordination of tank and motorized formations and the headquarters of tank formations, it was possible to draw a more definite conclusion about the direction of the enemy's main attack.

An exaggerated (without any particular reason) idea of the total number of formations of the Wehrmacht led to an error in determining the timing of a possible attack by the Germans. The plan dated September 19, 1940 assumed that the Germans could throw their 173 divisions against the USSR. In March next

Not 45% of divisions were concentrated on the Soviet borders (129 out of 286-296), and 62% of the Wehrmacht units (128 out of 208).

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In the same year, the expected number of German divisions deployed against our country was increased to 200 [862]. According to the latest Soviet estimate, set out in a note by Timoshenko and Zhukov dated May 15, 1941, this number was reduced to 180 divisions [863]. On the basis of the above figures, on June 20 the leaders of the NGOs and the General Staff came to the erroneous conclusion that the Germans were far from having completed the formation of their forces needed to attack the USSR. And the Red Army still has time for its own preparations. In fact, less than two days remained before the start of German aggression ...

On the morning of June 21, 1941, the General Secretary of the Executive Committee of the Comintern G.M. Dimitrov called People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs V.M. Molotov and, informing him of the information received from China about the impending German attack, asked him to pass it on to Stalin. Molotov was not at all surprised, but calmly but answered:

"The position is unclear. There is a big game going on. Not everything depends

from U.S. I will have a talk with Iosif Vissarionovich. If there is something special, I will call [864]

The words "a big game is being played" made such a strong impression on Dimitrov that he even underlined them when he wrote down the contents of the conversation in his diary. It is not clear what big game Molotov can talk about after attempts to clarify the situation through diplomatic channels have failed? By this time, Stalin had already ceased to be an equal participant in the international political game, as he continued to consider himself. And the time allotted for this deadly game was already rapidly running out. Blind confidence in his own rightness prevented Stalin from seeing the obvious - Nazi aggression inevitably approaching the Soviet Union. Instead of passively waiting for imaginary German proposals, he should at last begin to act, and act as decisively as possible. He had every reason to do so. Here is what Marshal A.M. Vasilevsky, who, by virtue of his official position, was well aware of the situation at that time:

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"<...> although we were still not quite ready for war, oh

than I already wrote, but if the time had really come to meet her, it was necessary to boldly step over the threshold. I.V. Stalin did not dare to do this, proceeding, of course, from the best of intentions. But as a result of the untimely bringing to combat readiness, the Armed Forces of the USSR entered into a battle with the aggressor in much less favorable conditions and were forced to retreat into the depths of the country with fighting" [865].

Later A.M. Vasilevsky spoke even more clearly:

"There was enough evidence that Germany was preparing for a military attack on our country - in our age it is difficult to hide it. Fears that there would be a fuss in the West about the supposedly aggressive aspirations of the USSR had to be discarded. By the will of circumstances beyond our control, we approached the Rubicon of War, and we had to firmly take a step forward. This was demanded by the interests of our Motherland" [866].

To do this, it was enough, with the sanction of the government of the country (that is, Stalin), to transmit to the districts a signal or a ciphered telegram signed by the People's Commissar of Defense, a member of the Main Military Council and the Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army with the following content:

TIA 1941..

But such a step has not been taken. Why? Why did our troops in the border districts find themselves exposed to a sudden attack by the enemy? Why were the fighters and commanders at 4 o'clock in the morning on June 22 were awakened by explosions of German shells and bombs? Even the Germans were surprised by the carelessness of the Russians.

A natural question arises: did the political and military leadership of the country know about the specific date of the German attack? How did it regard the apparent increase in intelligence activity on their part? After all, the Germans acted

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For example, units assembled at the training ground near Brest for the exercises, after the Germans began shelling them, began to launch rockets, demanding a ceasefire, believing that their own artillery was conducting it according to the plan of the upcoming exercise.

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extremely brazenly: on June 20-21, German aircraft violated the air border of the USSR 60 times. Soviet border guards with | By June 10, 1941, 108 enemy scouts and saboteurs were detained [867]. And there was a lot of such data coming from various sources and testifying to the obvious preparation of the Germans for an attack in the coming days, but it is difficult to establish when and to whom they were brought. Unfortunately, on many reports published in the collection

documents of the NKGB, there are no not only resolutions of leading persons, but also notes on their reading [868]. And

On June 18, 1941, a German sergeant-major who had crossed the border was detained in Ukraine, who, during interrogation, testified that at four in the morning on June 22, German troops would go on the offensive along the entire length of the Soviet-German border. He repeated his statement to the commander of the 15th Rifle Corps, Colonel Fedyuninsky, who told about it in detail in his memoirs. When asked why he went over to the Soviet side, the sergeant-major replied that he had hit the officer while drunk. For this he was threatened with execution. They decided to cross the border, especially since he always co- felt Russian, and his father was a communist. Seeing Fedyuninsky's doubts, the German added: "Mr. Colonel, at five o'clock in the morning on June 22, you can shoot me if it turns out that I deceived you." To the report of the commander, the commander of the 5th Army, Major General of the Tank Forces M.I. Potapov answered by phone: "You don't need to believe in provocations! You never know what a German can say out of fear for his own skin" [869]. The date of the attack - June 22 - was also mentioned by the saboteurs captured by the border guards in the second half of June. It is characteristic that they were sent for a short time - for 3-4 days.

On June 21 it became known that the German ships, which were in the ports of the Soviet Union, on June 20-21 suddenly urgently went to the open sea. So, the day before in the port of Riga there were more than two dozen German ships. Some of them had just started unloading, others were under loading. Despite this, on June 21 they all raised anchor. The head of the port of Riga, at his own peril and risk, forbade the German ships from going to sea and telephoned the People's Commissariat for Foreign Trade, requesting further

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instructions. This was immediately reported to Stalin. Fearing that Hitler might use the delay of German ships for the purposes of military provocation, Stalin immediately ordered the lifting of the ban on ships going to the open sea [870].

In the latest edition of Zhukov's memoirs of 2002, where the banknotes made in the first of them are restored, the marshal states about the date of the attack:

"Now there are different versions about whether or not we knew the specific start date and plan of the war. The General Staff of the day of the attack of the German troops became aware from the defector only on June 21 (hereinafter it is highlighted by us. - Auth.), About which we immediately reported to I.V. Stalin. He immediately agreed to put the troops on alert. Apparently, he had previously received such important information through other channels <...>"! [871].

Meanwhile, the authors of the highly competent work "1941 - Lessons and Conclusions", created under the auspices of the General Staff

ba, do not confirm the words of the marshal:

"With the receipt of direct data from various sources about an attack on our country, the People's Commissar for Defense and the Chief of the General Staff on the evening of June 21 suggested that Stalin send a directive to the districts to bring the troops to full combat readiness. The answer followed: "Prematurely", and before the start of the war there were no more than 5 hours [aces]" [872].

Thus, despite the clear and irrefutable evidence of the immediate readiness of the Germans to attack, Stalin did not dare to put into effect a plan to cover the state border. The fact is that with the receipt of an order to this effect, formations and units, without waiting for special instructions, from the areas of assembly on combat alert are advanced to the state border, to the areas assigned to them. Simultaneously with the rise of units on combat alert, their transfer to wartime states began, for which it was necessary to carry out mobilization measures. And, most importantly, a plan to cover the state

'! Why and on whose initiative these lines were removed by the censor or editor from the text of the memoirs of the first editions of the book, one can only speculate. Perhaps because Zhukov's statement did not correspond to the facts, or because the editors (and censors) were more satisfied with Zhukov's story about the meeting at which Directive No. | was adopted.

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It was envisaged to strike by aviation forces on targets and objects in the adjacent territory! Zhukov then could not tell everything about this in his memoirs for reasons of secrecy.

The option, however, in which it would be possible to occupy the cover zone with the troops and put the troops on combat readiness to repel a possible surprise attack by the enemy without mobilizing and delivering strikes on the adjacent territory, was not envisaged. No intermediate degree of readiness was established for the covering armies in order to have at least a part of the troops; capable of immediately embarking on combat missions. Thus, our military leaders became hostages of their own plan, which proceeded from outdated views on the initial period of the war, which provided for only one course of action when the aggressor unleashed the war. We had to improvise in order to remove the contradiction that had arisen: to bring the troops to the highest possible degree of combat readiness to repel a possible surprise attack by the enemy, while at the same time excluding the implementation of measures that could give the Germans a pretext for starting a war. According to Zhukov, they Tymoshenko insisted on bringing all the troops near the border districts into BATTLE READINESS. But Stalin rejected the proposed project, saying that perhaps the issue would still be settled peacefully. And in the bo-reported to him

The shorter text of the directive made some other amendments. Which one is not clear, since neither the original draft of the directive nor its shorter version before the amendments by the leader are known.

The inconsistency of the text of the directive signed by the military is striking: the troops TO BE IN FULL BATTLE READINESS, and the units TO BE IN BATTLE READINESS. Many researchers and historians are still arguing about this contradiction. In this regard, it makes sense to consider the content of the term "full combat readiness". Full combat readiness is now understood as the state of the highest degree of combat readiness of troops, in which they are able to immediately (or within the established time limits) begin to carry out combat missions. K. sozha

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Unfortunately, in 1941 in the Red Army, in contrast to the Navy, a clear system of combat readiness as they were built up was not established at that time. And full combat readiness at that time was not provided for by any documents, and its content was not written anywhere. Apparently, the following degrees of readiness differed in the Red Army at that time: mobilization, in which troops, manned according to peacetime states, serve according to the laws of this time and are ready for mobilization, "and combat, the content of which was described in detail in the order of actions of troops when they are raised on combat alert. At the same time, the combat alert was announced in two ways: without the withdrawal of all materiel and with the release of the unit in full force. In the latter case, formations (units) went to the areas of assembly (concentration) with the subsequent occupation of the designated area (subsection) of cover in readiness to perform combat missions only upon receipt of a cipher telegram (codegram): "To the commander of the corps (division) number. I declare an alarm with the opening of the "red" package. Signatures. But again, the commander of the army (corps commander) could give such an order ONLY upon receipt of the appropriate cipher telegram from the Military Council of the district about the putting into effect of the cover plan.

The phrase given in the directive: "At the same time, the troops <...> of the districts should be in full combat readiness to meet a possible surprise attack by the Germans or their allies", in our opinion, only emphasized that the commanders (commanders) and troops should be at their maximum readiness

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There were three operational readiness in the fleet - No. 3, 2 and 1. In short: operational readiness No. 3 corresponds to the state of peacetime; No. 2 - holidays are prohibited (shore leave is allowed), measures are taken to ensure, if necessary, a quick transition to readiness the use of weapons. Given Zhukov's well-known attitude towards sailors, the task of developing something similar in the Red Army was hardly set.

? It only to some extent corresponded to constant readiness in the current sense of the term (it was checked, as a rule, by raising troops on a training alert), since in the documents at a certain

During the period, aviation, mechanized and air defense units, unlike others, were ordered to be kept in constant combat readiness.

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(with the indicated restrictions) MEET a possible surprise attack by the enemy - and nothing more. It did not speak of full combat readiness, as a well-defined degree of readiness of troops. It is possible that the word "complete" was entered by Stalin, since Zhukov spoke everywhere about bringing units only to "combat readiness."

This is also seen from the content of the following paragraphs. It was ordered during the night of 22.66.41 only to covertly occupy the firing points of fortified areas on the state border. And further: "<...> put all units on alert." But formations of the covering armies are not allowed to enter the designated cover areas, since the directive specifically emphasized that "no other measures should be carried out without special orders. Keep the troops dispersed and camouflaged. The easiest way was to disperse and disguise the units that were in the camps and at the training grounds. But there they had, as a rule, a limited amount of ammunition, sufficient only to carry out training tasks. The rest of the combat property, including the property of "NZ", was in points of permanent deployment. You can't envy the army commanders: they had to solve this puzzle - how to prepare troops to repel a sudden attack of the enemy and not provoke the Germans. A wave of bewildered requests went to the headquarters of the districts and to Moscow.

If we agree that the directive mentioned above was approved and signed at a meeting with Stalin, which ended at 22.20, then it is not clear what caused the two-hour delay in its transmission? Has everything been done to ensure that the warning about the possibility of a surprise attack by the Germans is brought to the attention of the troops as soon as possible? It is impossible to understand this from Zhukov's story: he evaded instructions

' Perhaps the only mention of full combat readiness in the cover plans when they are put into action refers to fortified areas:

"<...> 7) All military installations of the forward edge of the UR should be occupied by the full composition of the garrisons and provided with cannons and machine guns. Occupation and bringing the structures located on the front line to full combat readiness should be completed no later than 2-3 hours after the announcement of the alarm, and for parts of the UR, after 45 minutes "[873].

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time - "in the evening" and nothing concrete ... Zhukov only remarked: "We will see what came of this belated order, we will see later." We briefly talked about what happened at the beginning of the book. It is hardly appropriate to explain the delay by the uncoordinated work of the departments of the General Staff: there everything was ready to receive the text of the directive, encipher it and transfer it to the troops. Zhukov's phrase is a direct allusion to Stalin, to his stubbornness. No wonder the "reviewers" from GlavPUR insisted on the exclusion of this phrase from the first edition of the memoirs'.

The delay in the transmission of Directive No. 1 has been noted by many historians. If even such a contradictory directive had been sent a couple of hours earlier, it would have had time to bring it to each connection. This would allow the troops near the border districts to meet the attack in a more organized manner and with fewer losses. After all, the mass disabling of wire communication lines began about two hours before the German invasion - at 2.00 on June 22. The directive arrived at the troops only at dawn. The headquarters of the ZapOVO received it at 01.45 and duplicated it in the army at 02.45 on June 22. But the wire communication had already been put out of action, and the headquarters of the 4th Army, for example, received it at 03.30, the headquarters of the 10th - only at 16.20. And the headquarters of the 3rd Army could not even get acquainted with the contents of the directive, since communication with it was never restored. And most of the formations in the border zone did not have time to receive a warning about a possible German attack, not to mention the implementation of the prescribed measures.

Some scholars have suggested that Stalin may have ordered that the transfer of the already signed directive be postponed until further notice. The fact is that just at that time he was waiting for a message from Berlin from the Soviet ambassador Dekanozov, who was instructed to personally clarify the situation with Ribbentrop. There was a possibility that the text of the directive would have to be changed again depending on the expected information from Berlin. Only after receiving the news that Ribbentrop was clearly avoiding a meeting with our ambassador, Stalin compared this with the evasive position of the German ambassador Schulenburg during the meeting with Molotov and with other facts known to him.

' This phrase was restored more than 30 years after the publication of the first edition.

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and ordered to send a directive to the troops. But this assumption contradicts the above statement of an authoritative source that the decision on the report of the military was never taken. In addition, it does not explain some inconsistencies and inconsistencies in the marshal's memoirs.

First of all, it is not clear what defector Zhukov reported to Stalin on June 21? During June 21 and on the night of June 22, several Wehrmacht servicemen ran over to our side. At 21.00, the Bug swam across and Corporal A. Liskov was detained. His Soviet propagandists declared him the first German defector, for greater importance "assigning" him the title of sergeant major. During the arrest, he immediately declared: on June 22, at dawn, the Germans would cross the border. Thus, by the beginning of the meeting with Stalin (20.50), information about the defector A. Liskov could not have arrived in Moscow. At the same time, it is difficult to admit that Zhukov reported to the leader about the testimony of the sergeant major, who was detained on June 18 (Three days later?!). He, of course, was interrogated all this time to make sure that he was not a provocateur or a spy .. This is the first, but not the last mystery.

Zhukov's story does not fit in with the now known information about the time of the meeting in Stalin's office. He's writing:

"I immediately reported to the Commissar and I.V. Stalin what M.A. Purkaev.

- Come with the people's commissar in 45 minutes to the Kremlin, - said I.V. Stalin.

Having taken with him a draft directive to the troops, together with the People's Commissar and Lieutenant General N.F. Vatutin, we went to the Kremlin. On the way, we agreed at all costs to achieve a decision to put the troops on combat readiness.

But Timoshenko at that time was at the previous meeting with Stalin, which ended at 20.15. On him,

' The official interrogation of the defector A. Liskov began at one in the morning on June 22 after he was taken to the headquarters of the commandant's office and an interpreter was called [874]. The report on his testimony was transmitted by phone to the People's Commissariat of the KGB of the Ukrainian SSR at 3:10 am on June 22 [875].

?* The testimony of this defector, indicating his name, surname and position, is certainly recorded in the relevant documents. His fate is still unknown. Most likely, he was shot after the intercession with predilection.

3 (Stalin's words "in 45 minutes" were also removed from the text of the first editions of the marshal's memoirs.

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in particular, an important draft resolution of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks was adopted on the organization of the Northern and Southern fronts and the appointment of command personnel (see Appendix 13). And at 20.50 the people's commissar again appeared in the leader's office, already together with Zhukov. When could they draw up a draft directive to the troops, leave the people's commissariat together for the Kremlin, and agree on something else along the way? And one more "problem": N.F. Vatutin, whom Zhukov is talking about, in the office

There was no Stalin, but there was S.M. Budyonny. Zhukov does not mention him and his proposals regarding measures to prepare for repelling a possible attack by Hitler, including the proposal to announce mobilization.

In this regard, let's try to express a somewhat paradoxical thought: no delay in the transfer of Directive No. 1 did not have. It was signed by the military later. This is directly indicated by the authors of the above-mentioned work, who directly worked with documents from the closed funds of various archives, including those that have not yet been declassified:

"The military-political leadership of the state only at 23.30 on June 21 made a decision aimed at partially bringing the five border military districts to combat readiness" [876].

In the light of the above assumption, events could develop as follows. At a meeting with Stalin, which began at 20.50, the proposal of the military to put the cover plan into effect did not go through. "But the question of how to increase the combat readiness of the troops to repel a possible German attack was undoubtedly discussed. After the meeting, Timoshenko and Zhukov, probably intended to work on the development of a directive on bringing the troops to combat readiness with restrictions that were supposed to exclude the very possibility of provoking the Germans. It cannot be ruled out that by this time Zhukov could have received a report from M.A. Purkaev about the defector. An hour and a half after the arrest

CM. Budyonny left unpublished memories of being called to Stalin on the evening of June 21, together with Timoshenko and Zhukov. This text has not been published anywhere. It was read in a TV show about Budyonny in 2004.

2? Moreover, Budyonny's proposal (if there was one) on mobilization could not pass, at the announcement of which the cover plan was put into effect in full automatically.

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A. Liskov, the essence of his statement about the German attack at dawn on June 22 (the border guards understood this without an interpreter), given its special importance (whether they believed him or not, but no one would have dared to hide such important information), could reach Moscow through the military command.

In addition, Timoshenko learned through the Intelligence Directorate that secret documents were being destroyed at the stake in the German embassy. As early as the morning of June 21, G. Kegel, whom we have already mentioned, summoned K. Leontiev from the Soviet intelligence officer to an emergency meeting and informed the latter that "the war would begin in the next 48 hours." At 7 p.m., G. Kegel, risking his life, once again called his curator to a meeting and conveyed the contents of the latest instructions from Berlin, which were discussed at a meeting of the diplomatic staff of the mission

said Ambassador Schulenburg. From these instructions it followed that ON the night of June 21-22, fascist Germany would begin military operations against the USSR.

— The embassy was instructed to destroy all secret documents. All employees are ordered to pack their belongings by the morning of June 22 and hand them over to the embassy. All employees of the embassy are ordered to stay in the embassy building <...>.

Saying goodbye to the scout, G. Kegel said again:

“Everyone in the embassy thinks that the coming night will start a war...

At about 9:00 p.m., an urgent special report was prepared in the Intelligence Directorate, which stated that, according to a verified source, fascist Germany would make a perfidious attack on the Soviet Union on the night of June 21-22, 1941. It was immediately delivered to the secretariat of I.V. Stalin, Minister of Foreign Affairs V.M. Molotov and Commissar of Defense Marshal S.K. Timoshenko [877]. This message, according to the approved list, was also handed over to Beria and Zhukov.

Here the score went to minutes, and everything began to spin. It is precisely this, apparently, that G.K. Zhukov, when he wrote that the defector “was immediately reported to I.V. Stalin, he immediately agreed to bring the troops to combat readiness. But this phrase was excluded from the original text, and instead a description appeared of the meeting in Stalin’s office, known from the memoirs of the marshal, where “members of

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Politburo.” But just in case, they decided not to indicate the time (didn’t they know?).

At 23.00 the last visitors left the chief’s office [878]. It is known that the leader went to bed very late, and before that he used to invite close people to a late dinner. A.I. recalls this. Miko yan, whose opinion should not be neglected: he should REMEMBER such a meeting with the leader on the very eve of the war.

“On Saturday, June 21, 1941, in the evening, we, members of the Polit Bureau, were at Stalin’s apartment. We exchanged opinions. The situation was tense.

Stalin still thought that Hitler would not start a war. Then Timoshenko, Zhukov and Vatutin arrived. They reported that information had just been received from a defector that on June 22, at 4 o’clock in the morning, German troops would cross our border (emphasis added. - Auth.).

Stalin and this time doubted the veracity of the information

tion, saying: didn't they transfer the defector specifically to provoke us?

Since we were all extremely alarmed and demanded that urgent measures be taken, Stalin agreed "just in case" to give a directive to the troops to put them on alert. But at the same time, instructions were given that when non-German planes fly over our territory, do not shoot at them, so as not to provoke.

<...> We parted at about three o'clock in the morning on June 22, 1941, and an hour later they woke me up: war! [879].

By this time, Stalin, having compared all the information he had received with the evasive position of Schulenburg during his meeting with Molotov that evening, finally realized that further delay was dangerous. The leader only demanded that the directive reported to him be shortened, indicating in it that the attack could begin with provocative actions by the German units, to which the troops of the border districts should not succumb, so as not to cause complications. G.K. Zhukov with N.F. Vatutin went into another room. Here Zhukov quickly dictated a short text of the directive, to which the leader made amendments. After that, Vatutin, with the text of the directive signed by Timoshenko and Zhukov, immediately went to the communication center of the General Staff in order to immediately transfer it to the districts.

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Interesting memories of the dramatic events of the evening of June 21 were left by N.G. Kuznetsov. In the book *On the Eve*, he wrote that at about 11 pm on June 21, Marshal S.K. called him. Timoshenko, mentioning that very important information had been received. In the office of People's Commissar of Defense Timoshenko, walking around the room, dictated something, and General of the Army G.K. Zhukov wrote. In front of him lay several completed sheets of a large radiogram pad. It was evident that the people's commissar and the chief of the General Staff worked for quite a long time.

"Semyon Konstantinovich noticed us and stopped. Briefly, without naming sources, he said that a German attack on our country was considered possible. Zhukov got up and showed us the telegram he had prepared for the frontier districts. I remember that it was lengthy - on three sheets (highlighted by us. - Auth.). It set out in detail what the troops should do in the event of an attack by Nazi Germany.

This telegram did not concern the fleets directly. After running through the text of the telegram, I asked:

- Is it allowed to use weapons in case of an attack?

- Permitted (the people's commissar was sure that this time he would receive the leader's sanction to bring the troops to combat readiness. After Stalin's instructions, he would hardly have decided so simply not to succumb to possible provocations

give Kuznetsov permission to use weapons. - Auth.).

I turn to Rear Admiral Alafuzov:

"Run to headquarters and immediately instruct the fleets on full actual readiness, that is, on readiness number one. Run!" [880].

The most that could be done by the head of the operational department of the Main Naval Staff (GM Sh), Rear Admiral V.A. Alafuzov, is to convey (but only with the sanction of the head of the GM Sh admiral I.S. Isakov) an oral order from the people's commissar to start transferring the fleet forces to actual readiness to open fire in the event of an attack. And Kuznetsov and Isakov began to call the headquarters of the fleets and flotillas 2.

' This means that at about 23.00 the military had not yet been ruled by Stalin
A SHORT text of the directive.

?* So, the Baltic Fleet, which had been on operational readiness M-2 (high readiness) since June 19, from 23:37 on June 21, 1941, began transferring forces to operational readiness M-1 (full combat readiness).

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Everything was done in such a hurry that directive No. 1 was to include tasks for the forces of the Navy. And only at 23.50 21] June (as soon as the sailors became aware of the decision to put the troops of the western districts on alert), the order was transmitted from the communications center of the People's Commissariat of the Navy to the military councils of the Northern, Baltic and Black Sea fleets, the commanders of the Pinsk and Danube flotillas: "Immediately switch to operational readiness No. 1" [881]. This is another confirmation that the decision to transfer to combat readiness was made no earlier than 23.30.

Those who managed to see the original directive (unlike directives Nos. 2 and 3, it has not yet been published for some reason) confirm that it was indeed written by Vatutin and has corrections made by Stalin. The time is also set there - 23.45. What this mark means is anyone's guess. On forms of telegrams, radiograms, etc. documents transmitted by a communication center, usually the time of receipt by signalmen, the time of transmission and the time of receipt by the addressee (the so-called receipt) are affixed. Most likely, the mark meant the time the text was handed over to the encryption department of the communications center of the General Staff (apparently, it took 30-35 minutes to encrypt). Much later, having received a copy of Directive No. 1, the Commissar of the Navy at 01.12 sent a more detailed order No. zn / 88:

"During 22.6-23.6 a surprise attack by the Germans is possible. The German attack may start with provocative actions. Our task is not to succumb to any provocative actions that could cause major complications. Simultaneously

fleets and flotillas to be in full combat readiness, to meet a possible surprise attack by the Germans or their allies.

I order, having switched to operational readiness No. 1, carefully mask the increase in combat readiness. I categorically forbid reconnaissance in foreign territorial waters. No other events are to be carried out without special orders" [882].

If you agree with the above version! (in our opinion, it basically removes the inconsistencies noted above)

' Throughout the work on the book, the co-authors had a rare mutual understanding and unity of views on all key issues. However, they seriously disagreed about the version presented above, proposed by L. Lopukhovsky.

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actions in the published memoirs of G.K. Zhukov), it turns out that there is no delay in the transmission of directive No. 1 the troops were not. The decision to transfer troops to combat readiness was made at 23.30 on June 21, they began to transfer at 0.25 on June 22. This time is also confirmed by A.M. Vasilevsky, who on the night of June 22 was constantly at his office:

"At the first hour of the night on June 22, we were ordered to urgently hand over the information received from the Chief of the General Staff G.K. Zhukov, signed by the People's Commissar of Defense and a directive <...>. At 00.30 on June 22, the directive was: sent to the districts" [883]. |

In the light of this version, the true meaning of the phrase GK becomes clear. Zhukov, cut out from the text of the memoirs: "We will see further what came of this belated order." "Belated" - the fault of Stalin, who at the decisive moment showed criminal inaction in the face of the inevitable attack of the aggressor and did not give sanction for bringing the troops of the western border districts to combat readiness in advance. The marshal could not (wasn't they allowed?) to say more during the years of L. Brezhnev's rule, who set a course for the rehabilitation of the leader, who had exposed his army to a sudden attack by the enemy. In the light of the tragic events of June 22, it was impossible to show the people that the most important decision was made at the very last moment, and even almost during the feast ...

Stalin, with his restrictions at the last moment, tied the hands of the commanders of the troops of the border districts, preventing them from taking more effective measures to prepare for repelling the attack. And the People's Commissar of Defense and the Chief of the General Staff, in the face of the danger that threatened the country, showed at least cowardice, not insisting on the early adoption of more decisive measures to prepare to repel the clearly prepared by the Germans

surprise attack. As a result, essentially criminal

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Due to the lack of reliable data on when and how the fateful decision was worked out, on which the condition in which our troops would meet the sudden attack of the enemy largely depended, other versions can be put forward. The truth can not be learned from

memoirs, but from declassified documents of the General Staff, including its encryption department and communications center.

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actions of the political and military leadership of the USSR, the troops of the covering armies of the border districts met the enemy invasion, being, with rare exceptions, in a peacetime position - in points of permanent deployment, in camps, at training grounds and in training centers. Due to the delay in warning about a possible surprise attack, only a quarter of the 57 divisions intended to cover the state border (14 settlement divisions) managed to occupy prepared lines and defense areas (mainly in areas where the enemy only demonstrated an offensive with limited forces). The Germans, on the other hand, made full use of all the benefits of surprise, turning their tactical success into an operational one.

Marshal of the Soviet Union RY. Malinovsky also assessed the actions of the country's top leadership:

"The troops continued to study peacefully, the artillery of rifle divisions was in artillery camps and on ranges, anti-aircraft weapons - on anti-aircraft ranges, sapper units - in engineering camps, and the "bare" rifle regiments of divisions were separately, in their camps. With the imminent threat of war, these gross mistakes bordered on a crime" (emphasis added by us. - Auth.) [584].

Later, when visiting the editorial office of the Military History Journal on August 13, 1966, in a moment of frankness, G.K. Zhukov made a characteristic confession recorded on tape:

"Timoshenko began to move something, despite the strictest instructions. Beria immediately ran to Stalin and said: well, they say, the military is not doing it, they are provoking, I have a report from <...> (inaudible. - Ed.). Stalin immediately telephoned Timoshenko and gave him a proper smack. This beat came down to me. What are you watching? Immediately call Kirponos to the phone, immediately take them away, punish the guilty and so on. I, of course, did not lag behind in this part. Well, it's gone. But other commanders did not dare. Give the order, then ... And who will give the order? Who wants to lay down their head? Here, for example, I, Zhukov, feeling the danger looming over the country, give the order: "deploy".

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Stalin is reported. On what basis? Based on danger. Come on, Beria, take him to your basement. <...> Of course, I do not relieve myself of responsibility <...>" [885].

Thus, Zhukov admitted that he did not have the civic courage to tell the leader the truth about the real state of affairs. That they missed the deployment of German troops for the attack, that the troops of the covering armies, in their composition, are not capable of repelling the German strike with large forces and ensuring the mobilization and deployment of the Red Army. G.K. Zhukov showed that he put his safety and personal well-being above the interests of the state. He did not want to put his head on the chopping block. This was done for him by hundreds of thousands of Soviet soldiers and citizens.

So could defeat have been avoided? What would happen if, for example, the troops of the covering armies managed to occupy the designated areas and positions and were allowed in advance to use weapons in an attack? There would be more organization and less panic, formations and units would suffer fewer losses in people, weapons and military equipment. Accordingly, the enemy would not have been able to overcome our positions occupied by troops so easily. The pace of the German offensive would have been slower, and their losses would undoubtedly have been higher. If the Germans had not been able to catch our aircraft at the airfields, their loss would not have been so great. By bringing the air defense assets to readiness, the headquarters and command and control posts, the most important infrastructure facilities, would suffer less damage. This would make it possible to carry out the mobilization of troops in the border districts in full and with better quality, and the main forces of the first strategic echelon would be better prepared for military operations. The moral state of the individual. composition and its stability in subsequent battles would be incomparably higher than after the shock caused by the surprise attack on June 22. Perhaps we could have avoided large-scale encirclements, which led to huge losses of our troops in people, weapons and military equipment.

However, given the overwhelming superiority in forces and means in the areas of strikes, our troops do not care

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would not be able to hold back the advance of the enemy. This is confirmed by the entire course of hostilities since the beginning of the German invasion. For example, in PriboVO, many formations did not return to their places of deployment after the exercises, but occupied their areas of destination. But this did not affect the results of the first battles.

We must not forget that the Red Army of the 1941 model was not at all the army that it became in 1944-1945. Its fighters and commanders, who survived to the end of the war, became incomparably better than themselves at its beginning, when they had no experience of war with a strong opponent. This also applies to the top Soviet command, including Stalin. Failure to understand this leads to a blind belief that the Red Army lost the beginning of the war only because the Wehrmacht was ahead of it. And this is fundamentally wrong: our army of that time could not help but lose to the Wehrmacht in a duel, because it was significantly inferior to it in quality. The question was only about the extent of the inevitable defeat.

Due to the numerous organic shortcomings inherent in the Red Army and its leadership, frontier battles could not end in anything other than defeats. In the initial period of the war, they were, unfortunately, quite natural or, to put it in modern language, they were not programmed. The Wehrmacht was head and shoulders better prepared for modern warfare than the Red Army. On the side of Germany at that decisive moment were significant strategic advantages over the USSR: the presence of a fully deployed invasion army and allies acting according to a single plan, a good choice of the moment for the attack, and the direction of the main attack on the relatively weak grouping of Soviet troops located in the Bialystok salient. This allowed the Wehrmacht to seize the initiative from the very beginning, to achieve great success both in the border battle and later, when the troops of the second strategic echelon of the Red Army and its newly mobilized reserves entered the fight.

The grossest mistakes and miscalculations of the political and military leadership of the country and the army in recent months and days only exacerbated the scale of the catastrophe, as a result of which the personnel of the united forces were largely knocked out.

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neny and parts. Poorly trained replacements, which replaced regular servicemen, further strengthened the qualitative superiority of the German troops over the Soviet ones. Huge human, material and territorial losses, from which the USSR managed to recover very slowly, in turn, became one of the reasons for the loss of the entire summer-autumn campaign of 1941.

Not everyone will agree with this and our other conclusions. This is natural: fierce disputes in the scientific community on the issues raised in the book are largely due to the inaccessibility of many important documents relating to the eve and the beginning of the war. In order to more convincingly trace the direct relationship between the state of the Red Army on the eve of the war, its unpreparedness for the war that Germany imposed on us, and the results of the battles in the initial period of the war and later, a separate large study is needed.

following.

The natural question is: if everything was so predetermined, then how did our troops manage to recover from numerous defeats in the first half of the war and ultimately achieve victory? Why, despite the defeats, the consequences of which no army in the world could overcome, did the USSR win the war in the end?

The fact that the Soviet troops still managed to save their country from complete defeat was also quite natural. History rarely develops by chance. The USSR initially had significant strategic advantages over Germany, and all the tactical, operational and even strategic successes of the Wehrmacht, achieved in the first half of the war, were not enough to overcome them. The main superiority of the Soviet Union lay in its enormous human and material resources. It was not possible to implement it immediately, it took time, and not a little. We have such a mentality. No wonder Bismarck warned the Germans: "The Russians harness slowly, but drive fast."

The Red Army was not completely defeated, it continued to fight, gaining combat experience with each new battle. And he got it at a high price ... In this from

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wearing, you can recall the words of Marshal G.K. Zhukov - and he already knew the German army: "We must finally face the truth and, without hesitation, tell about how it really was. We must appreciate the German army, which we had to face from the first days of the war. ... We learned during the war and learned and began to beat the Germans, but it was a long process" [886]. And he, speaking later about the post-war personnel policy, in particular, noted: "Commanders learned war in war, paying for it with the blood of our people" [887].

Thanks to a rigid centralized system of leadership, it was possible in a fairly short time to completely mobilize the people to fight the enemy. "Everything for the front, everything for victory" - this slogan was carried out rigorously and purposefully. At the same time, the leadership of Germany, hoping for a quick and easy victory, only after the defeat at Stalingrad switched to a total method of waging war. In the first years of the war, about half of Germany's industrial enterprises turned out peaceful products. Even in conditions of an acute shortage of labor, German women throughout the war were mainly engaged in household chores, and not in the production of weapons for the front.

The turning point in the war was largely facilitated by the solid economic foundation created in the depths of the country. Already by the second half of the war, it was possible to achieve, of course, not without

help from the allies, superiority over Germany in the production of basic weapons. But, undoubtedly, the main source of the strength of the USSR and its ability to resist a merciless enemy was the unbending will to victory of the overwhelming majority of the Soviet people and their leadership. Without them, the entire enormous potential of the USSR could not have been realized in practice. During the war, at the cost of great bloodshed, the Red Army constantly learned to fight better and better, while the Wehrmacht, on the contrary, lost its elite personnel. The combat experience acquired by our army gradually turned into one single Soviet strategic advantage.

Accordingly, the defeat of the Germans in the final analysis was no less natural than their successes in the first half of the war. The advantages of the Germans, for all their significance and numerousness, were temporary. In many ways

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thanks to our mistakes, they made huge initial successes. If these successes had been smaller, if the ratio of losses, especially human losses, in the first period of the war had not been so large in favor of the Germans, they would have broken down much faster: the Germans did not have the resources for a protracted war with a stubborn enemy. It was this circumstance that determined the temporality of their success. The Wehrmacht started the war with the USSR being fully mobilized and deployed. This was his strength and at the same time his weakness. The strength consisted in the fact that at the initial stage of aggression, he received an undeniable advantage over the Red Army, which took a long time to recover from the first defeats. And the weakness of the Wehrmacht consisted in significantly smaller reserves for building up efforts in comparison with its adversary in the event of a protracted war. The German leadership made the whole calculation on the success of the blitzkrieg, a long stubborn struggle was not included in their plans.

The fact that we managed to recover relatively quickly from the defeats of the initial period of the war, undoubtedly, played an important role in another strategic advantage of the USSR, which consisted in its vast territory. With counterattacks and stubborn defense, the Red Army succeeded in inflicting losses on the enemy, gaining time and imposing positional forms of struggle on him. As the Germans moved deeper into the territory of the USSR, their communications lengthened, while the Soviet ones shortened. Superiority in supplying the troops with everything they needed, especially in view of the unfolding partisan movement in the occupied territories, gradually went over to the side of the defenders. After the collapse of the blitzkrieg, the war in the East took on the character of that long struggle of attrition that the Germans struggled to avoid. The defeat of Germany was only a matter of time, because it was significantly inferior to the coalition of its opponents in human and material resources. The balance of power on the Eastern Front began to slowly but surely change in favor of the Soviet Union. In the course of long and bloody battles, the German defense gradually

turned into patching "Trishka's caftan" and, despite individual successes, eventually began to fall apart more and more.

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I would also like to mention one more important event, although not directly related to the armed struggle, but without which this struggle would soon become simply impossible. Intense hostilities continuously consume the LI huge amounts of materiel, especially ammunition and weapons. In addition, considerable stocks of them were lost in the very first days of the war due to the mass loss of warehouses located too close to the border. Without their replenishment, it was impossible to resist a well-armed and equipped enemy. Everyone is well aware of the decision of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR and the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks to create the Headquarters of the High Command of the Armed Forces of the USSR on the second day of the war. [much less well known is another resolution of the same bodies "On the establishment of the Evacuation Council", adopted the next day, June 24, 1941 [888]. It irrefutably proves that Stalin then soberly assessed the strength and capabilities of the Red Army and did not believe in its ability to defeat the enemy on its territory with "little blood, a mighty blow", because on the day this decision was adopted, the outcome of the border battle was still far from clear.

Thanks to this timely decision, it was possible to carry out from under the noses of the Germans a huge amount of valuable industrial equipment, raw materials, stock of finished units and parts, and most importantly, qualified personnel. Until the end of 1941, over 12 million people were evacuated to the rear areas of the country, 122 enterprises of the People's Commissariat of the Aviation Industry, 43 of the People's Commissariat of the Tank Industry, 71 of the People's Commissariat of Armaments, 96 of the People's Commissariat of Ammunition, 80 of the People's Commissariat of Mortar Weapons, 199 of the People's Commissariat of ferrous metallurgy, 91 - People's Commissariat of the chemical industry, 45 - People's Commissariat of non-ferrous metallurgy, etc. [889]. All this, in combination with the industrial base created in advance in the Urals and Siberia, made it possible to deploy in the east of the country the production of military equipment, ammunition and equipment on an unprecedented scale. They were enough to supply both those deployed after mobilization and numerous newly formed units and formations of the Red Army with everything necessary for a long fight against the enemy.

From the very beginning of the war, the powerful powers extended a helping hand to the USSR, and first of all - England, and then

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USA. After that, strategic superiority in the allies immediately went over to the side of the Soviet Union. Even before the opening of the Second Front in Europe, the Allies pulled over a significant part of the German forces. This is especially

aviation and navy side. Germany was compelled to spend on the war in the air and in the world a significant share of her already limited human and material resources. Her own allies also lacked resources. Not only were they unable to substantially support her efforts, but they themselves were constantly in need of her quarters.

Meanwhile, the USSR received invaluable material support from its allies. The wide flow of aid that came to the country under the Lend-Lease program was not limited to the supply of weapons, military equipment and vehicles. The Allies helped the Soviet Union fill the shortage of some of the most important types of strategic material resources, such as food, aluminum, copper, rubber, gunpowder and its components, high-octane gasoline, etc. and so on. They supplied it with modern industrial equipment and the latest technologies and enabled it to concentrate its main production resources on the production of the main types of military equipment and ammunition for it.

Much has now become clear to us. But it turns out that back on October 2, 1941, on the day the German "general" offensive against Moscow began, General G. Thomas, head of the military economy and military industry department of the OKW, in his review of the then military and economic situation in the USSR, analyzed four main options for the possible development of further events. As a result of their analysis, Thomas quite reasonably predicted that with the most favorable development of events for the Germans at the end of 1941, even if they had taken Moscow and Leningrad, they would still not have succeeded in completely breaking the Soviet resistance [890]. The more serious territorial successes of the Wehrmacht did not promise a complete victory for the Germans. In addition, the leading economic specialist of the OKW did not at all take into account the possible assistance to the Soviet Union from the allies. In other words, even the successful implementation of all the goals and objectives set in the Barbarossa plan was by no means

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enough to completely crush the USSR and force it to capitulate. Consequently, the blitzkrieg strategy against the Soviet Union was not suitable, its human and material resources, as well as its geographic dimensions, were too great. For the same reasons, Germany, all the more, could not win a war of attrition against the USSR.

Hitler's main mistake was the very decision to unleash a war in general, and a war against the Soviet Union in particular. This mistake became fatal for him. After the Germans failed to force the USSR to capitulate by another blitzkrieg, just as they had previously failed to lead England out of the war, the agony of the Third Reich began, which was no longer possible to prevent. All further actions of the Nazi leadership were aimed, in essence, only at prolonging this agony, and

they managed to stretch it out for a long 3.5 years. Nevertheless, in the end, they were quite naturally and convincingly finished off in their own lair, although millions of people had to pay for the desired Victory with their lives...

CONCLUSION i

In connection with the 70th anniversary of the outbreak of the Second World War, disputes about its causes and the immediate culprits of its unleashing revived again. Most historians agree that the war was unleashed by Nazi Germany. The main reason was Hitler's manic desire for revenge for the defeat in 1918 and his idea of expanding the living space for the Aryan people of Germany. There are also polar points of view. So, there was a Russian scientist, candidate of military sciences, who tried to lay the blame for the outbreak of the world war on the leadership of Poland, which rejected Hitler's "moderate" demands regarding the "Polish corridor". Finally, quite recently, a parliamentary commission of the European Union, by its decision, placed on Germany and the Soviet Union equal responsibility for instigating a world war.

However, the most widespread version was that the USSR, having concluded a non-aggression pact with Germany on August 23, encouraged Hitler to go to war. This opinion is shared by the authors of the book. Both the military-political blocs that had formed by 1939 in Europe and opposed each other—the Anglo-French and the German-Italian—were interested in an agreement with the USSR. As a result, the USSR was given the opportunity to choose with whom and under what conditions it would negotiate, and for the first time entered the ranks of the powers arranging world politics. Unfortunately, negotiations with the Anglo-French delegation on the creation of a united front against Hitler did not lead to anything. In this environment

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Stalin was seduced by momentary exits and agreed to conclude a pact with Germany.

Having entered the Second World War de facto as an independent military-political force, the USSR did not officially declare war on anyone. In turn, both England and France did not oppose the USSR, leaving its invasion of Poland without consequences? and the annexation of Bessarabia and the Baltic states. The Soviet Union made great efforts to stay out of the flaring up struggle as long as possible. This, of course, was explained not only by his peacefulness - he naturally had his own interests. The start of the war in Europe allowed the USSR to start revising its western borders. Moscow was able to regain control over the territories, most of which had previously been part of the Russian Empire.

Their accession significantly improved his strategic position. In fact, this was not a military acquisition, but a price (then the Soviet Union did not particularly think about high moral principles) for neutrality with respect to Germany. The relationship with her at that moment was not an alliance, which is in the name of achieving a common goal. The goals of Stalin and Hitler were different, just at some stage their interests temporarily coincided. The Soviet Union would become an ally of Germany if it concluded an appropriate treaty with it or if it conducted military operations together with it according to a single plan or under a single command. But this did not happen, and could not happen. And relations between the USSR and the Western allies seriously deteriorated only in connection with the war against neutral Finland.

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In the Russian Federation, the immoral nature of the Molotov Pact—Ribbentrop received an unequivocal parliamentary assessment.

2 This issue was specifically considered in the English Parliament. In an additional secret protocol to the "Agreement on Mutual Assistance between the United Kingdom and Poland" it was stipulated that only in the event of aggression from Germany, Great Britain would provide Poland "with all the support and assistance that is in its power." In case of such actions on the part of another European power, "The Contracting Parties shall discuss together the measures to be

jointly adopted" [891]. This addition gave England a legal basis to avoid war with the USSR.

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It is often claimed that by concluding the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, the Soviet Union delayed the clash with Germany for two years and moved the border away from the country's important industrial and administrative centers. As an example, they recall that the border in the most important western direction was moved from Minsk by 300 km. But the Germans covered this distance in a week of hostilities, encircling the main forces of the Western Front along the way. At the same time, the Bialystok ledge became a huge trap for the troops of the 10th Army stationed there. And the construction of the "Molotov Line" started on the new border did not have time to turn into a serious defensive line, but it practically devalued the "Stalin Line", depriving it of huge material resources, and most importantly, garrisons. In this regard, it must be admitted that the 1939 pact brought a much greater strategic gain to Berlin than to Moscow. Hitler's quick victory in the west led to a radical change in the balance of power in Europe, and the USSR, unexpectedly for itself, was left face to face on the continent with an incredibly strengthened Germany.

The Germans, who developed the theory of blitzkrieg, successfully tested it in Poland and France. They made the main bet on the surprise attack with

a powerful first strike, using the maximum amount of forces and means at the very beginning of hostilities. A sudden strike by forces of a previously deployed and prepared invasion army, which was based on tank and motorized formations supported by large aviation forces, allowed them to immediately seize the strategic initiative, disrupt the planned mobilization and measures for the strategic deployment of Soviet troops, and largely disrupt the work of the political and military leadership of the USSR.

The USSR, its army and navy were preparing to repel aggression from Germany and its allies. But the development of the country's armed forces was mainly of an extensive nature: first of all, their quantitative growth was going on, often to the detriment of the quality of training. And this growth itself was not at all balanced. The text has said enough about this. Quick and complete defeat of the Anglo

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French troops against the backdrop of the unsuccessful actions of the Red Army in the war with Finland forced the leadership of the USSR to take a more sober approach to assessing its real combat capability.

However, Stalin continued to blindly believe that Hitler would not decide on a war on two fronts, although by this time Germany was not conducting military operations on land in Europe, and the army continued to be fully mobilized and deployed. He built his calculations in isolation from military-strategic considerations, hoping by political, including diplomatic, means, if not to prevent the war, then at least to delay its beginning. In this respect, Stalin adhered to the well-known formula of Clausewitz about the predominance of politics over military affairs. Believing in his own infallibility, he did not particularly listen to the opinions of others, including military leaders, reducing their role to the level of mere performers.

In connection with the growing threat of war in April-June 1941, additional urgent measures were taken to strengthen the grouping of troops of the first strategic echelon, improve the organizational structure of the troops and equip them with new types of weapons and military equipment. However, simultaneous large-scale reorganization and rearmament inevitably led to a decrease in the combat capability of many units and formations. A few months before the start of the war, the USSR began to simultaneously form an unreasonably large number of mechanized corps, and as a result, there was neither time, nor people, nor material capabilities to complete it.

Under these conditions, there is no reason to talk about the preparation of the USSR for an attack on Germany in 1941, as some historians and publicists do. They believe that Stalin, having rejected the May proposals of the General Staff on the

attacking the Wehrmacht with a preemptive strike, missed his chance to seize the initiative and achieve victory over Germany. But the real level of mobilization and combat readiness of the Red Army, especially in comparison with the readiness of the Wehrmacht, which had been mobilized and deployed long ago, did not then allow us to hope for the success of this adventure. Even in the event of an immediate announcement of mobilization in the USSR, the Germans

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preempted the Soviet troops in deployment and concentration for at least a month. It was impossible to make up for lost time. Such an alternative, taking into account the low operational training of our commanders and their staffs, their slowness, weak (compared to the Wehrmacht) training of our troops to conduct maneuver operations, could only aggravate the scale and consequences of the catastrophe.

Therefore, the efforts of Stalin, who was aware of the lag of the Red Army in the combat effectiveness of the troops, by any means to delay the beginning of a possible battle with Germany were completely justified. It was necessary to buy time to complete the planned measures to increase the combat capability of the army and strengthen the country's defense capability. Unfortunately, these efforts went far beyond reasonable limits. The Soviet military leadership did not take into account the possibility of covert deployment of enemy strike groups and the experience of the first operations of the German troops against the Wormwood and in France. The plans for covering the state border were not designed to repel attacks by large enemy forces, and the grouping of covering forces and their combat capabilities did not correspond to the real situation. The measures taken by the political and military leadership of the USSR to increase the combat capability and combat readiness of the troops of the border districts to repel a possible sudden attack by the Germans turned out to be inadequate to the threat and, moreover, belated. Many of them, adopted at the last moment, could not be implemented due to financial insecurity or due to the unrealistic deadlines.

In this situation, much depended on reconnaissance, which was supposed to reveal in time the enemy grouping, his intentions and, most importantly, the possible time frame for his readiness for an attack. Stalin, possessing the largest amount of information that he received through all possible channels, was never able to make sense of the huge flow of disinformation organized by the Germans, and did not seize the moment when it was necessary, having finished with the policy of waiting, to decide on the transfer of troops to a state of complete readiness to repel a German attack. And that Red

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The army was not promptly brought to combat readiness, the main fault lies with Stalin. There was no doubt that Germany would attack in the next few hours, but the military did not manage to convince the "Master" and insist on more decisive measures to prepare the army to repel the sudden attack of the Wehrmacht. Through the fault of the Soviet political and military leadership, the enemy's attack turned out to be sudden for our troops and therefore had terrifying long-term consequences for the entire USSR. The mechanism for turning on the huge military potential that the country and its armed forces possessed was launched belatedly. This was a gross miscalculation with grave consequences, which largely predetermined the unsuccessful course of the entire first half of the war and its tragic results.

However, some publicists, mainly of a communist orientation, are trying to prove that this was not a miscalculation at all, but a careful and far-sighted calculation, which later fully justified itself. Allegedly, Stalin showed restraint, giving Hitler the opportunity to attack the Soviet Union in order to make Germany the aggressor and the USSR its victim. Thus, he wanted to win support from the democratic powers, primarily from the United States. In an attempt to justify their idol, they forget that until recently they proved that it was the United States that was the real culprit in inciting a world war in Europe. In fact, in strategic terms, the common interests of the United States and the Soviet Union then undoubtedly prevailed over ideological contradictions. By that time, the US leadership had already finally decided which side to take in the flaring European conflict. Under the Lend-Lease Act of March 11, 1941, American assistance was intended "for the government of any country, the protection of which, in the opinion of the President, is vital to the defense of the United States." And this country immediately became England, single-handedly continuing the struggle against the Axis powers, which had long ago convincingly demonstrated to the whole world their aggressive nature and maniacal desire for world domination. And for England any

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a country that opposed Germany immediately became a welcome ally. So another argument about the foresight of the leader of all peoples is not supported by facts and is caused by the ideological views of its authors and their supporters.

In ascertaining the reasons for the defeat of our troops in the initial period of the war, we cannot bypass the question of their culprits. Undoubtedly, the main one was Stalin, who had full and unlimited power in the country. It was he and the leaders of the People's Commissariat of Defense and the General Staff who were obedient to his will, by their inaction at the decisive moment, in 1941 exposed our regular army under attack by the Wehrmacht. The legend of the full

With the surprise attack and the overwhelming numerical superiority of the enemy in tanks and aircraft, Stalin created for self-justification. It has long been refuted by Soviet and German archival documents. But until now, some historians and publicists are trying to revive it under various sauces.

Stalin himself indirectly confessed to his miscalculations, speaking on May 24, 1945 at a reception in the Kremlin in honor of the participants in the Victory Parade: "Our government made quite a few mistakes." At the same time, Stalin made a toast: "To the people who are considered 'cogs' of the great state mechanism, but without whom we are all marshals and commanders of fronts and armies, roughly speaking, we are not worth a damn thing. Some 'cog' went wrong and it was over <...>" [892]. The most important component of the combat effectiveness and combat readiness of the troops were and will remain in all conditions the people to whom Stalin assigned the role of mere cogs. But the leader considered the leading cadres to be 'cogs' and shuffled them like a deck of cards. So the failures occurred because of the mistakes of the 'government', and not of its own, but also because some 'cogs' went wrong somewhere. But Stalin would not have been Stalin if he had not quickly found 'traitors' and 'enemies', on whom he immediately blamed his own guilt for what had happened. And only after a series of brutal defeats and setbacks in the first half of the war, paid for with great bloodshed, of which he himself was largely guilty, did Stalin begin to better understand operational-strategic issues and listen to the opinion of

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heads of the General Staff and commanders of the fronts. But before the leader got used to military matters, he managed to break a lot of firewood.

Mistakes and miscalculations in preparation for war were made at all levels of government. But it is known that the higher this level, the more dangerous and disastrous their consequences. Therefore, it was Stalin, who stood at the head of the state mechanism created by himself, who bears the greatest responsibility for all the failures of the Red Army, just as he deserves recognition for all its subsequent successes. Unfortunately, there were far more failures at the beginning of the war than successes...

It should be noted that in the official historiography of the Patriotic War, the main thing was to prove the infallibility of the political and military leadership of the country and the armed forces. Propaganda clichés were introduced into the public consciousness, which were considered indisputable truth. Under the watchful eye of ideological and military censorship, any possibility of any other views on the history of our country in the 20th century was completely ruled out. All attempts to rethink certain events were declared falsification of history. Only the 20th Congress of the CPSU, and then the Central Committee of the Party, in the resolution of June 30, 1956 "On overcoming the personality cult and its

consequences" pointed to Stalin as the main culprit of the mistakes and miscalculations that brought our state to the brink of catastrophe and led our troops in the first months of the war to enormous losses in people, weapons, military equipment and equipment.

However, this was by no means the whole truth. A considerable share of the blame for the defeat of the Red Army at the beginning of the war falls on those who zealously exposed Stalin's personality cult. It was they, however, under the auspices of Stalin, who prepared the army for a future war. And, as it turned out, not at all the one that was imposed on the Soviet Union by Hitler and his generals. It is impossible to list all the culprits here, but it is still worth naming not the mediocre leaders of the military department.

K.E. Voroshilov, the hero of the Civil War and the "first marshal" (he became the first after he disbanded in 1937-1938

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shot most of the true heroes of the war). Not very literate in military terms, he was distinguished by personal devotion to the leader and was the first to exalt his military merits, presenting Stalin as the founder of the Red Army and the organizer of almost all victories in the Civil War! Obviously, thanks to this, he managed to hold out at the head of the military department for 15 years. Due to the obvious lack of competence, Voroshilov delved into the problems of combat and mobilization training a little, being more interested in its representative and ceremonial side. And the successes in building the armed forces were achieved mainly thanks to the efforts of more qualified specialists of the people's commissariat and his talented deputies, whom, by the way, he treated with hostility, to say the least. On the other hand, Voroshilov, doing the will of his patron, undoubtedly succeeded in unleashing a campaign of mass repressions in the Red Army.

After Voroshilov was removed from the post of People's Commissar of Defense, work to eliminate the identified numerous shortcomings was headed by S.K. Timoshenko. He did a lot to improve the combat training of troops, especially their left training, but paid insufficient attention to the training and retraining of command personnel, taking into account the changed methods of warfare. Moreover, he was also dominated by the experience of the Civil War, and he was not able to fully understand what the Germans brought to the new methods of unleashing and waging war. Unfortunately, Timoshenko, unlike Zhukov, did not leave us his memoirs (according to some reports, he categorically refused to write his memoirs). And he could tell a lot (if he was allowed) about his meetings with Stalin ...

Timoshenko and Zhukov, in the time remaining before the war, did not succeed in clearing away the rubble of shortcomings that had accumulated by 1940-1941. Much was already simply impossible to transfer

lat. At the same time, some of their undertakings and proposals to increase the combat capability of the troops, for various reasons, did not meet with the proper response from the political leadership.

' Voroshilov wrote the works "Stalin and the Red Army" (1929), "Stalin and the construction of the Red Army" (1939).

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countries. And they lacked the personal courage to defend their proposals, knowing the well-known stubbornness and vindictiveness of Stalin. Besides, they believed in his infallibility and gift of foresight. Following the leader's categorical instructions not to provoke the Germans, they paid more attention to the suppression of unauthorized actions of the command of the districts, rather than to the organization of strict control over the execution by them of orders already given to increase the combat readiness of the troops.

G.K. deserves a separate discussion. Zhukov, whose activities as Chief of the General Staff can hardly be called successful. We believe that we have no right to hush up the fact that Zhukov, even to a greater extent than People's Commissar for Defense Tymoshenko, bears the main responsibility for the low mobilization and combat readiness of the troops, for underestimating the combat power of the enemy and, ultimately, for the defeat of the Red Army in the initial period of the war. The General Staff and its leader neglected to study the German methods of achieving surprise. A more perfect and reliable system for alerting troops, bypassing the existing multi-stage system for putting a cover plan into action, and measures to increase the stability of the communication system in case of failure of wire communication nodes and lines even before the start of hostilities, were not developed. A major omission in the work of the General Staff should also be considered the fact that a system of combat readiness of troops was not developed, which makes it possible, depending on the situation, to consistently increase their combat effectiveness without putting the cover plan in full. It was possible, at least, to establish some intermediate degree of readiness for some formations of the covering armies, in order to have at least a part of the troops capable of immediately starting hostilities. All this was part of the duties of the chief of the General Staff and subordinate departments, primarily the operational one.

And now it makes sense to give an assessment of the leaders of the military department, made by competent specialists of the Institute of Military History of the Russian Federation and the Institute of Natural Science Problems of the Academy of Natural Sciences of the Russian Federation.

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"Developed [by the general staff in the prewar period

the plan for conducting military operations turned out to be untenable not so much because of the operational-strategic miscalculations made (although there certainly were such), but primarily due to the fault of the political leadership, which, by its erroneous decision, prevented the timely implementation of the planned mobilization measures (in fact, they disrupted her [mobilization]). The inconsistency shown in this situation by the top military leadership - the People's Commissariat of Defense and [the general headquarters, or rather, Marshal S.K. Timoshenko and General of the Army G.K. Zhukov, who failed to defend the decisions made and achieve their implementation, cannot be regarded otherwise than as a lack of competence of these persons and inconsistency with their posts" [593].

We know what these mistakes and miscalculations led to. It is no coincidence that after the arrest of the command of the Western Front, headed by D.G. Pavlov, I. Stalin's faithful henchman, head of the GlavPUR of the Red Army L.S. Mehlis by the hands of his subordinate! made numerous serious accusations against the leadership of the General Staff. Apparently, the fate of Zhukov in July 1941 hung in the balance. Arrested in 1953, L.P. Beria, who at that time was not at all comfortable with lying, in a note from prison reminded his former colleagues in the Politburo that Stalin, for the defeat of our troops in border battles and failures in command and control, wanted to shoot Zhukov, like Pavlov. And how they all together persuaded Stalin to appoint him commander of the front and thus saved the future war hero [894]. A week after the execution of Pavlov? Zhukov was

'
Member of the Military Council of the Western Front Corps Commissar A.Ya. Fominykh, the only one from the leadership of the front who escaped arrest and trial.

? D.G. Pavlov, undoubtedly, was guilty of the defeat of the troops of the front. But they shot him on July 22, 1941, in order to blame him for the defeat, and at the same time as a dangerous witness who blindly carried out everything

leader's instructions. In 1956 he was posthumously rehabilitated and revolted.
new in rank.

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dismissed from the post of Chief of the General Staff!'. Has he already left Moscow on July 31? CM. Shtemenko in his book did not say anything about the reason for the removal of Zhukov. He only said dryly that Zhukov was appointed commander of the Reserve Front, without saying a single kind word about his work as chief of the General Staff.

Without a doubt, Marshal of the Soviet Union G.K. Zhukov, given his character, strong will, experience in general of a successful operation on the river. Khalkhin Gol and service in the troops, as commander of the troops

With the outbreak of war, KOVO would have done more than leading the General Staff. Actually, this was confirmed during the war. It is no coincidence that Zhukov's military talent and outstanding military talents earned him world fame and deep respect from a significant part of the Soviet people.

The responsibility for the defeats cannot be removed from the command of the border districts, which was largely disoriented by the leader's opinion that Germany could not wage a war on two fronts and by the TASS statement of June 14. For example, due to their low efficiency, the repeated order of the People's Commissar of Defense dated 19.6.41 on the dispersal and camouflage of aircraft from border districts was not carried out, which led to grave consequences.

Recently, constant and systematic work has been carried out in Russia to rehabilitate Stalin's personality - either as the "most effective manager", or as a commander, under whose wise leadership Nazi Germany was defeated. At the same time, they forget about the exorbitant price of this victory. Millions of those who were shot and tortured in the GULAT camps, exiled members of the families of "enemies of the people" are hushed up. At the same time, they are trying to erase from the people's memory the names of talented military leaders who dare

' Decree of the State Defense Committee of July 29, 1941 No. GKO-325s.

2 Stalin signed Order No. 0270 only on August 10: "<...> Deputy People's Commissar of Defense Army General, comrade. Zhukov G.K., in connection with his appointment as commander of the reserve armies, is relieved of the post of chief of the General Staff of the Red Army <...>" [895].

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whether to defend their views on the construction and preparation of the Red Army for war.

Stalin's apologists are not averse to distancing themselves from the crimes of the Stalinist regime. They hush them up, emphasizing only the merits of the leader during the war. Yes, he played a big role in achieving a turning point in the war, led the people and the army to victory. And what was he to do? It can be compared with the captain of a ship built by him, which he himself brought to the reefs in a storm. And he began to save the ship, the crew, his life and his power. And he saved with all the cruelty that he was capable of. But in the defeat of a strong enemy, not only the mind, will and determination of Stalin played a role, but also the courage and selflessness of the entire people, who stood up to defend their families and their homeland. They made it possible to reverse the grave consequences of the defeats of the first half of the war and achieve victory.

It is difficult to understand why, after all the revelations of Sta-

Lean continues to enjoy rather high popularity in society. So, when choosing the "name of Russia" in 2008, he received more than half of the votes. Although Stalin's guilt for only two of his crimes against his own people out of many - repressions and the defeat of the Red Army in the summer and autumn of 1941 - lies entirely with him. In historical terms, they outweigh all the "achievements" of the "best manager" of the era of many years of communist rule. Without a doubt, all these achievements would be blocked many times over if the country developed under the conditions of a normal democratic system. Apparently, this is explained by the fact that the current government cannot cope with any evil spirits that surfaced after the collapse of the USSR. People missed the "strong hand", not realizing what it could lead them to in the future. Meanwhile, the solidarity condemnation of the repressions and other crimes of Stalinism could become one of the elements of the foundation of the Russian idea, which the current ideologists are looking for and cannot find in any way.

The perpetrators of the defeats are subject to the judgment of history. But for the mistakes of Stalin and his entourage, our much suffering people paid the price, which gave all their strength to turn the war back. Paid off with a huge loss

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we are at the front with the life and blood of soldiers and officers who showed miracles of courage and heroism in the selfless struggle against the invading enemy. It was they who, with their courage, selflessness, steadfastness, having compensated for all the mistakes and miscalculations of the command, ultimately defended the independence of their homeland.

The innumerable sufferings and sacrifices of the 41st year, brought to the altar of Victory, were not in vain - without them there would be no Victory in the 45th.

AFTERWORD

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And

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To illustrate the work, photographs from the Central Archive of Film and Photo Documents, the federal and military archives of the FRG, the archives of the journals Military Historical Archive and Signal, as well as the personal archives of the authors were used.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS FOUND IN THE TEXT

A

A is the army

ABTU - Auto-armored control

ak - army corps

AK - army corps (German)

ap - artillery regiment

ArchVO - Arkhangelsk Military

county

b / g - combat-ready (th)

bmp - brigade of marines

b / m - high power

br - brigade

brmp. - marine brigade

BUS - more training camps

BF - Baltic Fleet

BEC - British Expeditionary Force in
France

VA - Air Army

Air Force - Air Force

VGK - Supreme High Command

vdbr - airborne brigade

vdK - airborne corps

VKP(b) - All-Union Communist Party
(Bolyneviks)

VNOS - aerial surveillance, warning
and communication

VO - military district

VF - air fleet

G

GA (army group)

GAZ - Gorky Automobile Plant

gap - howitzer artillery
regiment

GK - High Command

GlavPUR - Main Political Directorate of the
Red Army

GSD - mountain rifle division

d

DZOT - wood-earth fire
dot

DN - DIVISION

DOS - long-term firing structure

DOT - long-term firing point

Z

ZAPOVO - Western special military

district

ZapF - Western Front

ZIS - Stalin Automobile Plant

jad. (jap.) - fighter aircraft

division (regiment) K

kav. - cavalry

cavalry regiment - cavalry regiment

KaIVO - Kalinin military

county

cap - corps artillery REGIMENT

KBF - Red Banner Baltic Fleet

CER - Chinese Eastern Railway

kd (kk) - cavalry division (corps)

KOVO - Kyiv Special Military District

korvrag - body enemy

corinzhener — hull engineer

KP - command post

L

LVO - Leningrad Military District

mbr - mechanized brigade (sov.)

mbr - motorized brigade (German)

MVO - Moscow military

county

md - motorized division

mk - mechanized corps (owl)

MK - motorized body (German)

sea infantry - Marines

mot. - motorized

moto-bron. - motor-armored

mp - motorized regiment

MP - mobilization plan

msbr - motorized rifle brigade msp - motorized
rifle regiment

chief of staff - division chief of staff

NKVD - People's Commissariat of Internal
Affairs

NPO - People's Commissariat of
Defense

NP - observation point

\®)

obot - a separate fire battalion
throwing tanks

Obs - separate communications battalion

od - security division

OdVO - Odessa Military District

03. - lake

ozadn - separate anti-aircraft artillery
division

okae - a separate corps air squadron

OKW - High Command of the German Armed
Forces

OKH - High Command

German ground forces

ops - a separate communications regiment

orb - a separate reconnaissance battalion

ORrVO - Oryol Military District

osapb - a separate sapper battalion

otb - a separate tank bata LYON

otd. - separate

och. - security (th)

P

Air defense - anti-aircraft defense

PVFI - Pinsk military flo
tilia

pd - infantry division (German)

pp - infantry regiment

PPD - point of permanent deployment

PribOVO - Baltic Special Military
District

PriVO - Volga Military District

PT - anti-tank (th)

PTBR - anti-tank brigade of the RGK

VET - anti-tank defense (weapon)

R

R. - river

rb - reconnaissance battalion

RGK - reserve of the Chief Commander
vaniya

Red Army - Workers 'and Peasants'
Red Army

RKKF - Workers 'and Peasants' Red
Fleet

RP - area of destination

www

SAVO - Central Asian Military District

sapb - sapper battalion

SAU - self-propelled artillery installation

sbr - rifle brigade

sd (sp) - rifle division (regiment)

NWF - Northwestern Front

SibvVO - Siberian Military District

sk - rifle corps

SKVO - North Caucasian Military District

Art. - station

STZ - Stalingrad Tractor Plant SF -
Northern
Fleet

T

tank. - tank

tb (tbr) - tank battalion (brigade)

TVD - theater of operations

TTR - tank group

td (tp) - tank division (regiment)

At

UR - fortified area US - training
camps uch., ucheb. -
educational

X

HVO - Kharkov Military District

C

TsAMO RF - Central Archive of the
Ministry of Defense of the Russian
Federation

H

ChTZ - Chelyabinsk Tractor Plant of the
Black
Sea Fleet - Black Sea Fleet

E

equipment – crew

YU

SWF - Southwestern Front SWF -
Southern Front

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APPS

Annex 1

Fuhrer Headquarters of the
Fuhrer and Supreme Commander 12/18/1940. armed forces.
9 Supreme High Command Ex
No. 2 of the Armed Forces. Ro Operations
Headquarters Top secret.
Department of National Defense. For command only. No. 33408/40.
DIRECTIVE NO. 21 PLAN "BARBAROSSA"

The German armed forces must be ready to defeat Soviet Russia in a short campaign before the war against England is over. (Variant "Barbarossa".)

The ground forces must use for this purpose all the formations at their disposal, with the exception of those necessary for the defense of the occupied territories against any surprises.

The task of the air force is to release such forces to support the ground forces during the Eastern campaign, so that ground operations can be counted on quickly and at the same time limit the destruction of the eastern regions of Germany by enemy aircraft to a minimum. However, this concentration of Air Force efforts in the East must be limited by the requirement that all theaters of military operations and areas where our war industry is located be reliably protected from enemy air raids and that offensive operations against England, especially against her sea lanes, should by no means be weakened.

The main efforts of the navy should, of course, be concentrated during the Eastern campaign as well.

against England.

The order for the strategic deployment of armed forces against the Soviet Union, if necessary, I will issue eight weeks before the scheduled start of operations.

Preparations requiring a longer time, if they have not already begun, should be started now and completed by [5.5.41

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It must be of decisive importance that our intentions to attack are not recognized.

The preparatory measures of the higher command instances must be carried out on the basis of the following basic provisions.

]. General intent

The main body of the Russian ground forces, located in Western Russia, must be destroyed in bold operations by means of a deep, rapid advance of tank wedges. The retreat of the combat-ready troops of the enemy to the wide expanses of Russian territory must be prevented.

Through rapid pursuit, a line must be reached from which the Russian air force will be unable to carry out raids on German imperial territory.

The ultimate goal of the operation is to create a defensive barrier against Asiatic Russia along the Volga-Arkhangelsk common line. Thus, if necessary, the last industrial region remaining to the Russians in the Urals can be paralyzed with the help of aviation.

In the course of these operations, the Russian Baltic Fleet would quickly lose its bases and thus be unable to continue the fight.

The effective actions of the Russian air force must be prevented by our powerful strikes at the very beginning of the operation.

I. Proposed allies and their tasks

1. In the war against Soviet Russia on the flanks of our front we can count on the active participation of Rumania and Finland.

The Supreme High Command of the Armed Forces shall, in due course, agree and determine in what form the armed forces of both countries, upon their entry into the war, will be subordinated to the German command.

2. The task of Rumania will be to support the offensive of the southern flank of the German troops with selected troops, at least at the beginning of the operation, to pin down the enemy where German forces will not operate, and otherwise to carry out auxiliary service in the rear areas.

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3. Finland must cover the concentration and deployment of a separate German northern group of troops (part of the 21st Army) coming from Norway. The Finnish army will conduct combat operations together with these troops.

In addition, Finland will be responsible for the capture of the Hanko peninsula.

4. It should be considered possible that by the beginning of the operation the Swedish railways and highways will be made available for use by the German group of troops destined for operations in the North.

III. Operations

A) ground forces. (In accordance with the operational thoughts reported to me.)

The theater of operations is divided by the Pripyat swamps into northern and southern parts. The direction of the main attack should be prepared north of the Pripyat marshes. Two groups of armies should be concentrated here.

The southern of these groups, which is the center of the common front, has the task of advancing with especially strong tank and motorized formations from the Warsaw area and to the north of it and splitting the enemy forces in Belorussia. In this way, prerequisites will be created for the turn of powerful units of mobile troops to the north, so that, in cooperation with the northern army group advancing from East Prussia in the general direction to Leningrad, destroy enemy forces operating in the Baltic. Only after completing this urgent task, which should be followed by the capture of Leningrad and Kronstadt, should operations begin to take Moscow, an important center of communications and military defense.

mindset.

Only the unexpectedly rapid collapse of the Russian resistance could justify the formulation and execution of these two tasks simultaneously.

The most important task of the 21st Army during the Eastern campaign remains the defense of Norway.

The forces available in excess of this (mountain corps) should be used in the North primarily for the defense of the Petsamo region and its ore mines, as well as the route of the Arctic Ocean. Then these forces, together with the Finnish troops, should advance to the Murmansk railway,

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to disrupt the supply of the Murmansk region through land communications.

Whether such an operation will be carried out by German troops (two or three divisions) from the Rovaniemi region and south of it depends on the readiness of Sweden to put its railways at our disposal for the transfer of troops.

The main forces of the Finnish army will be assigned the task, in accordance with the advance of the German northern flank, by an offensive to the west or on both sides of Lake Ladoga, to pin down as many Russian troops as possible, and also to capture the Hanko Peninsula. —

The army group operating south of the Pripjat marshes is to, by means of concentric blows, with the main forces on the flanks, destroy the Russian troops stationed in the Ukraine, even before the latter reach the Dnieper.

To this end, the main blow is delivered from the Lublin region in the general direction of Kyiv. At the same time, troops located in Romania are crossing the river. The rod is in the lower reaches and carry out deep coverage of the enemy. It will fall to the lot of the Romanian army to tie down the Russian forces located inside the pincers being formed.

At the end of the battles to the south and north of the Pripjat marshes, the following tasks should be ensured during the pursuit:

in the south, to occupy the Donets Basin, which is important militarily and economically, in a timely manner;

in the north - quickly go to Moscow. The capture of this city means, both politically and economically, a decisive success, not to mention the fact that the Russians will lose the most important railway junction.

b) the air force. Their task will be, as far as possible, to hinder and reduce the effectiveness of the counteraction of the Russian air forces and to support the ground forces in their operations in decisive directions.

This will be especially necessary on the front of the central army group and on the main axis of the southern group.

armies.

Russian railways and communication routes, depending on their importance for the operation, should be cut or put out of action by capturing the most important objects located closest to the combat area (river crossings) by the bold actions of the airborne troops.

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In order to concentrate all forces for the fight against enemy aircraft and for direct support of the ground forces, raids on military industrial facilities should not be carried out during the operation. Such raids, and above all against the Urals, will be on the order of the day only after the completion of maneuver operations.

B) Navy. In the war against Soviet Russia, he will have the task of ensuring the defense of his coast, to prevent the breakthrough of the enemy navy from the Baltic Sea. Considering that after reaching Leningrad the Russian Baltic Fleet will lose its last stronghold and will find itself in a hopeless position, major operations at sea should be avoided until that moment.

After the neutralization of the Russian fleet, the task will be to ensure complete freedom of sea communications in the Baltic Sea, in particular, the supply of the northern flank of the ground forces by sea (minesweeping).

GU. All orders that will be given by the commanders-in-chief on the basis of this directive must absolutely definitely proceed from the fact that we are talking about precautionary measures in case Russia changes its current position towards us.

The number of officers involved in initial preparations should be as limited as possible. Other employees whose participation is necessary should be brought to work as late as possible and introduced only to the particular aspects of the training necessary for the performance of their official duties each of them individually.

Otherwise, there is a danger that serious political and military complications will arise as a result of the disclosure of our preparations, the date of which has not yet been set.

W. I expect oral reports from the gentlemen of the commanders-in-chief about their further intentions, based on the current directive.

Report to me through the Supreme High Command of the Armed Forces on the planned preparatory measures for all branches of the armed forces and on the course of their implementation.

Adolf Gitler

Source: Dashichev V.I. Hitler's strategy - the path to disaster, 1933-1945: in 4 vols. T. 3. M.: Nauka, 2005. S. 85-89.

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Appendix 5

NUMERICAL COMPOSITION OF THE —
LUFTWAFFE IN OPERATION "BARBAROSSA" BY THE BEGINNING OF THE WAR

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tactical long-range reconnaissance"

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combat aircraft

"With

including serviceable"
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seaplanes and weather scouts

transport aircraft, incl. serviceable

Source: Segtapu apd She \$ °Reported directly to the High Command of the Luftwaffe;

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AVAILABILITY OF AIRCRAFT AIR FORCE OF THE RKKA

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Source: Combat and numerical strength of the Armed Forces of the USSR

during the Great Patriotic War. Statistical compendium No. | (June 22, 1941). Moscow: Institute of Military History of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation, 1994.

pp. 251-265.

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Appendix 7 ON
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Source: Combat and strength of the Armed Forces of the USSR during the Great Patriotic War.
Statistical compendium

No. 1 (June 22, 1941). Moscow: Institute of Military History of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation,
1994, pp. 305-316.

Notes: n/a - no
data. Distribution of combat-ready crews by types and

aircraft brands in the Black Sea Fleet (with the Danube military flotilla) were not found in the documents.
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Appendix 12

COMBAT AND MANUFACTURER OF THE TROOPS
OF THE SECOND STRATEGIC ECHELON OF THE RKKA,
TRANSFERRED TO THE WESTERN MILITARY DISTRICT IN THE
BEGINNING OF THE WARRIORS

When- | Zap
Formations, forces and means BOVO KOVO Total

BARELY
A
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rifle

divisions

Separate

shelves

p nerny

33210 | 38 806 | 33910 |95 765 | 201 691
rifles and carbines | 22858 | 50 825 | 23075 |84 312] 181070
[submachine guns _| 30 | 68 | 243 | - | 31.

Shooting

manual and easel large-caliber
a o o

oelle field guns [anti-
aircraft guns | 30 | No. | 4| 8 armed [mortars] [E [454 [No. |. | 84°

bank 1 27] 9 [0 1307 2440 | 203 |
3143 | 2525 | 8311 2750 | 269 2886 |1 tailoring
equipment [tractors from italy
___| 180 |
81 | 180 7 1 - | 5170 | 172 |15233| 2

Sources: Combat and numerical strength of the Armed Forces of the USSR

during the Great Patriotic War. Statistical Compilation No. 1

(June 22, 1941). Moscow: Institute of Military History of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation, 1994, pp. 19-22. Drig E. Mechanized corps of the Red Army in battle. M.: AST, 2005. S. 503.

1941 In 2 books. Book. 1. M.: International Fund "Democracy", 1998.

S. 677.

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Annex 13

DRAFT DECISION OF THE POLITBURO OF THE CC AUCP(B) ON THE ORGANIZATION OF FRONTS AND APPOINTMENTS OF COMMAND STAFF

June 21, 1941 Special folder

1. Organize the Southern Front as part of two armies with the seat of the Military Council in Vinnitsa.

2. Appoint Comrade Tyulenev as commander of the Southern Front, leaving behind him the post of commander of the Moscow Military District.

3. Appoint Comrade Zaporozhets as a member of the Military Council of the Southern Front.

In view of the secondment of Comrade Zaporozhets as a member of the Military Council of the Southern Front, appoint Comrade Mekhlis as head of the Main Directorate of Political Propaganda of the Red Army, while retaining the post of People's Commissar of State Control.

1. Appoint Comrade Budyonny as commander of the armies of the second line.

2. To appoint Comrade Malenkov, Secretary of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, as a member of the Military Council of the armies of the second line.

3. Instruct People's Commissar of Defense, Comrade Timoshenko, and Comrade Budyonny, Commander of the Second Line Armies, to organize a headquarters with a seat in Bryansk. \414\

A

Instruct the head [of the Headquarters Comrade Zhukov, general leadership of the Southwestern and Southern Fronts, with a visit to the place.

731

At

To entrust Comrade Meretskov with the general leadership of the Northern Front, with a visit to the place.

m

To appoint Comrade Kuznetsov, Secretary of the Leningrad City Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, as a member of the Military Council of the Northern Front.

Source: AP RF. F.3Z. Op. 50. D. 125. LI. 75-76. Manuscript, original, autograph by G.M. Malenkov. There are marks and corrections (1941)

Documentation. Book. 2. No. 596).

June 22 - Day of Remembrance and Sorrow (instead of the prologue)

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JUNE. 1941
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